

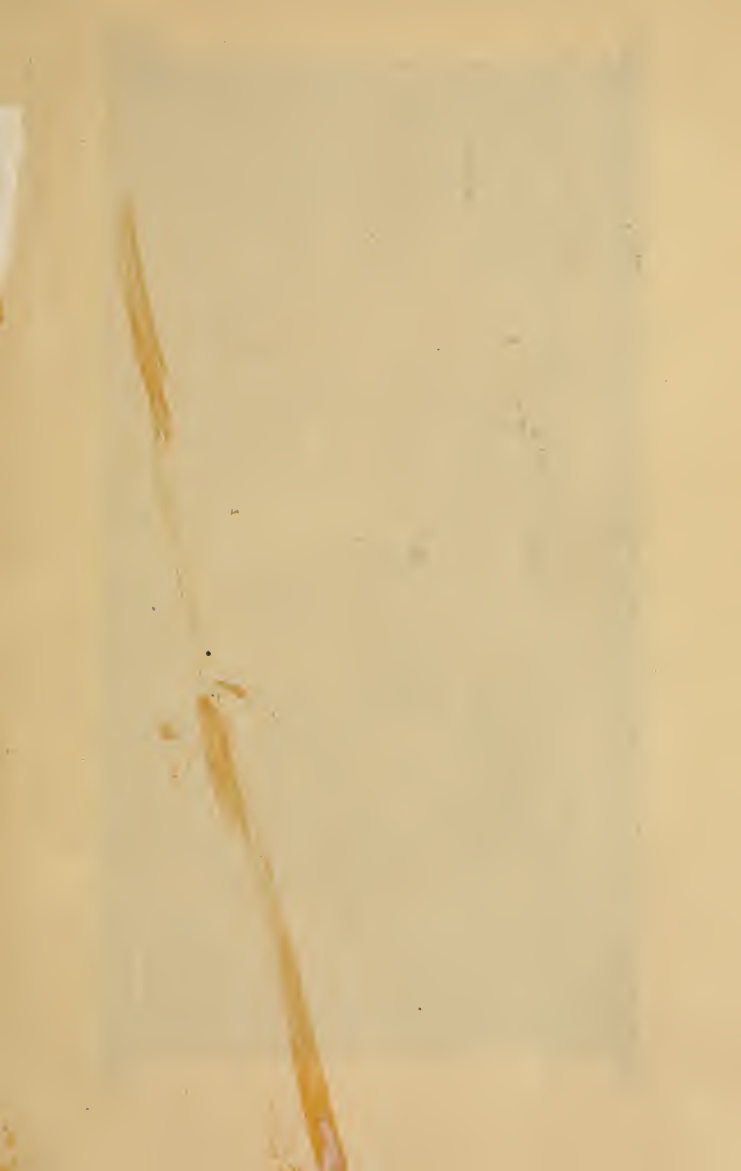




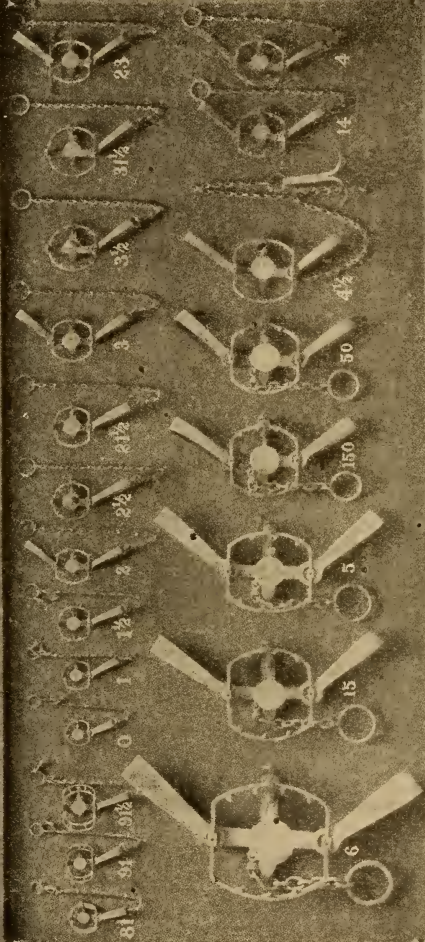


STEEL TRAPS.





ONEIDA COMMUNITY, LTD.



NEWHOUSE TRAPS — ALL SIZES

STEEL TRAPS.

Describes the Various Makes and Tells How
to Use Them — Also Chapters on
Care of Pelts, Etc.

BY
A. R. HARDING.

PUBLISHED BY
A. R. HARDING PUBLISHING CO.
COLUMBUS, OHIO

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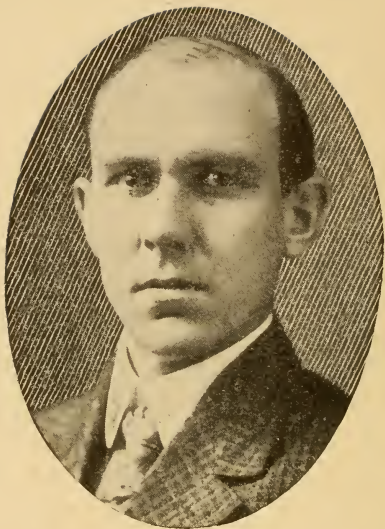
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G. R. Harding.

INTRODUCTION.



O those that have followed the setting of Steel Traps there is a fascination or "fever" which comes over them every fall about the time of the first frosts. The only remedy seems to be a few weeks on the trap line.

While some look upon trapping as an unprofitable business, yet the number is becoming rapidly less, for more and more people are yearly deriving pleasure, profit and health from out-door life such as trapping, hunting, etc. There are thousands of trappers scattered over America who are reaping a harvest of fur each year from their Steel Traps valued at hundreds of dollars in addition to the healthful sport they enjoy.

In some parts of Canada and the

Northwest a trapper in a year catches fur the value of which together with the bounty brings him \$1,000.00 to \$2,000.00. It is said on pretty good authority that a trapper in British Columbia a few years ago caught upwards of \$6,000 worth of fur, principally marten, in one season.

There are many thousands of trappers scattered from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Ocean and from the Pacific to the Atlantic that make hundreds of dollars each year with Steel Traps.

There is also a vast number who trap only a few weeks each season. This includes boys and farmers after the busy season.

The actual number engaged in trapping is not known. Neither is the actual value of the raw fur catch, but it is thought to exceed \$10,000,000 yearly. Is it any wonder then that so many want to know more about Steel Traps and Trapping?

Considerable of the information herein in regard to traps, scent, de-

coy, etc., is gathered from old and experienced trappers from all parts of America as well as from the great trap manufacturers, Oneida Community Ltd., so that readers can rely upon the information imparted in this book as being trustworthy. Some books, purporting to be of value to hunters and trappers, are written by men who have never followed a line of traps or been in close touch with trappers.

The author of this work has been engaged for many years in trapping and collecting furs and has come into close contact with many of the leading trappers of the country.

Steel Traps are far superior to Snares or Deadfalls from the fact that they can be used for both land and water trapping while Snares and Deadfalls are adapted to Land Trapping only.

A. R. HARDING.

CHAPTER I.

SEWELL NEWHOUSE.

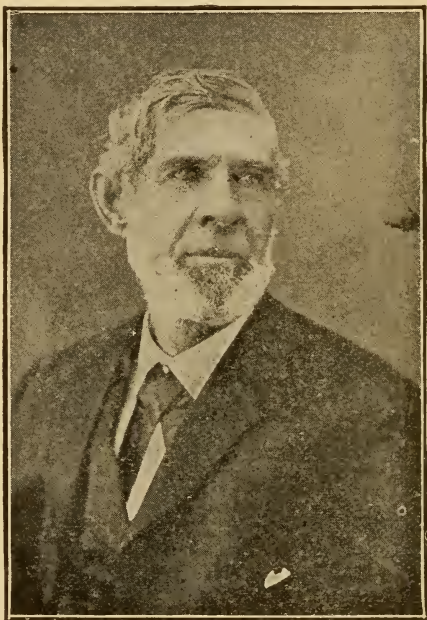


R. SEWELL NEWHOUSE, the inventor of the Newhouse Trap grew up surrounded by the Iroquois Indians of the Oneida Tribe; that tribe which alone of all the Red men cast in their lot with the Americans in our great struggle for liberty.

At an early age he learned the gunsmith's trade. In those days guns were all made by hand, and in small shops. Mr. Newhouse soon became very skillful both in making and shooting the rifle. At that time "Turkey Shoots" were very popular, and Mr. Newhouse was always sure of his bird at sixty to eighty rods. It was a puzzle to many of the old hands how he managed to shoot so accurately, even when the wind was blowing "half a gale" till it was finally discovered that he had fitted his rifle with an adjustable wind sight. This was one of his early inventions that has now come into common use in target shooting.

The Indians were very fond of shooting at a mark both with the rifle and the bow and ar-

row, but they would seldom try conclusions with "Sewell"—as they all called him—for he could always out shoot them with the rifle, and very



MR. SEWELL NEWHOUSE.

few of the tribe were as skillful as he with the bow and arrow. In wrestling too, a favorite game of the day, Mr. Newhouse was more than

a match for the best men of his time both white and red.

Some time before the year 1840, Mr. Newhouse undertook the manufacture of traps and so popular had his traps become that in 1842 they were well known to all the tribes of the state, so that about this year, when a large part of the Oneidas moved to Green Bay, Wisconsin Territory, an essential part of this outfit was a stock of Newhouse's traps. Thus their fame spread to the West.

It is related that a delegation of chiefs from one of the Algonquin tribes of the Great Lake region once called at Mr. Newhouse's Shop. They had used some traps from a rival manufacturer but were much disgusted with them for in the intense cold of their country the springs would break. "As breaks the pipe of peace in war time." They looked over his stock of Traps, pressed down the springs with their moccasined feet, grunted and shook their heads in disapproval. Then Sewell went out to the frozen creek nearby, the savages watching in silence. He chopped out a huge piece of ice, and bringing it to the shop broke it into pieces which he threw into a large tub of water, then setting half a dozen of the Traps he plunged them into the water, and in sight of the astonished and pleased Red Men he sprung them all off.

This severe test was enough for the visitors, and at his own price Mr. Newhouse sold them his entire stock of traps. The affair greatly pleased the neighboring Oneidas for well they knew when their "Sewell" made and tempered a trap spring by his secret and "magical" pro-



THE FIRST SHOP.

cess it would stand up to its work under any and all circumstances.

Early in the fifties Mr. Newhouse removed from his home at The Oneida Castle up the Valley to a spot now known as Kenwood. Here close by the bank of the rushing Oneida he established himself in a little smithy and began to make his famous traps on a larger scale. He

was soon after assisted by some of the mechanics of the Oneida Association — as the old Oneida Community was then called—of which Mr. Newhouse had become a member. In a few years it became evident from the increasing demand that the business must be enlarged and a small factory was built for the purpose.

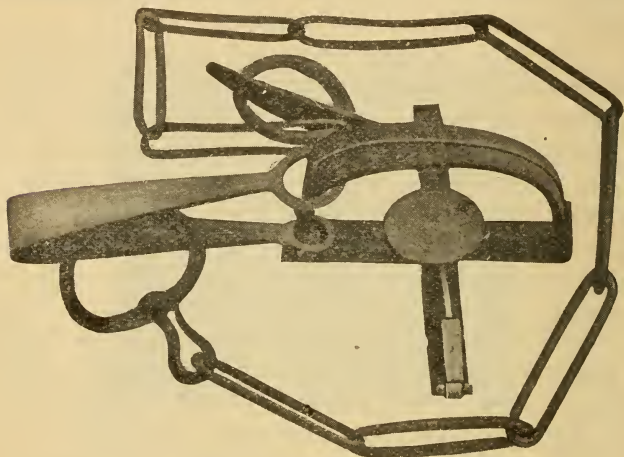
Still the demand continued to increase as the Community began to send out an agent to solicit orders in the West. The great Hudson Bay Company sent in some large orders a custom by the way, which they have continued annually from that early time until the present day.

More shops were erected, water power and special machinery were introduced but still the demand outgrew the supply, till finally the Community was obliged to build on a much larger scale at the present site of its factory, where the waters of Sconondoa Creek furnished for a long time ample power for the business.

Here Mr. Newhouse for many years after he ceased to work at the bench and forge, spent his time in perfecting the manufacture and in the general oversight and inspection of the work. With the eye of a lynx he was ever alert to see that no trap bearing his name went out of the factory except in perfect condition. Here before he left this world for his long, long rest he carefully educated and trained a number of men

to continue the business with the same painstaking spirit he had so long maintained.

The Trap illustrated here is one of the earliest made by S. Newhouse after the business was established in the Oneida Community Shops about the year 1853.



OLD NEWHOUSE TRAP.

Every piece was hand forged from wrought iron or steel. It was roughly but strongly made and has endured for over half a century. This trap belonged to one of the pioneers of Wisconsin who had used it for many years. It is still in good working order, the spring being as lively as on the day Mr. Newhouse so carefully and skillfully forged and tempered it.

CHAPTER II.

WELL MADE TRAPS.



AMONG the first requisites and of the utmost importance to successful trapping is the possession of an outfit of *well made Steel Traps*.

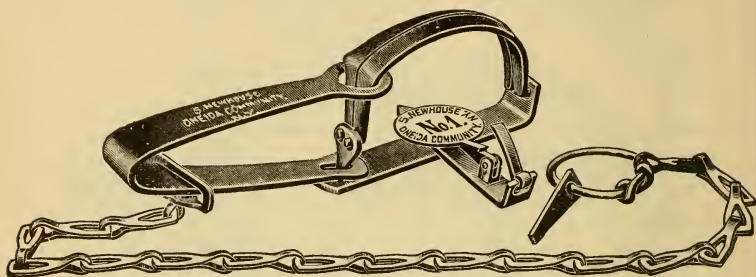
That the young trappers may understand what are the requisites of a good trap we will describe in detail one that has held its own in the estimation of the professional trappers for sixty years, and then we will endeavor to point out wherein the many so-called "improvements," that have been put on the market, have uniformly failed of success.

What the main spring is to a watch, a trap spring is to a trap, and unless the spring is made of a properly compounded steel and is of the right form and proportion and correctly tempered it will surely fail and make the whole trap worse than useless.

Certain mixtures of pig iron are used in making spring steel and if these mixtures are varied from in any particular or if the steel has a surplus of carbon, or is deficient in that ele-

ment, it will not take a proper temper and consequently is of no value. A proper manipulation in the rolling mill is also necessary, or the steel may be entirely ruined in rolling.

A good spring when set should show a nearly uniform curve throughout. This indicates that it is properly tapered so as to bring a uniform strain on the steel. The lasting qualities of a



A WELL MADE TRAP.

spring are greatly dependent on the correctness of this point.

The "bows" or holes in the spring must be of a proportion to properly fit the jaws and have such a "twist" as will allow them to lie flat when set, and the temper must be so moderated as not to be brittle or "high", otherwise they may break if sprung without anything between the jaws. For it is well known that it is a much harder strain on any trap to be sprung thus than to snap on to the leg of an animal,

Another very important thing is to have the strength of the spring proportioned to the size of the trap, for an excessively stiff spring is more apt to break the leg bone of the animal and increase the liability of "legging" as the trappers call it, while a very weak spring may allow a vigorous animal to draw its foot out, especially if caught low down.

And last but more important than anything else, the spring must have just the right temper, for a bad tempered trap spring is like a bad tempered wife, a worse than useless incumbrance. And do not let the tyro imagine that it is easy to temper a trap spring, for it requires a long experience and very expensive and carefully studied conditions and apparatus to produce anything like uniform results.

Few persons realize the unusually trying conditions under which a trap spring has to do its work, and it is safe to say that no mechanical contrivance performs its functions with greater precision than a well made and tempered trap spring.

A No. 1 spring weighs less than three ounces and will exert a force of between 70 and 80 lbs., and one of these has been known to remain under strain for over thirty years and then spring as promptly as though just set.

The jaw of a trap should have a good wide

bearing surface, otherwise it will be apt to break the animal's leg, bone, a calamity always to be avoided, especially in dry land trapping, for as before remarked "legging" is thus likely to follow. Anything like a sharp cutting edge or a saw tooth is especially objectionable, for our object in catching an animal is to obtain its fur and not to amputate its limbs. As a prevention of "legging" the Nos. 81, 91, 91½ traps, described elsewhere, are especially designed. The pintle or end bearings of the jaws should fit loosely in the holes to allow for rusting and a little freezing, and there should also be a slight end play for the same reason.

The weight and strength of a jaw should be sufficient to prevent it from being sprung or bent enough to throw it out of its bearing when it is set or when sprung by the animal.

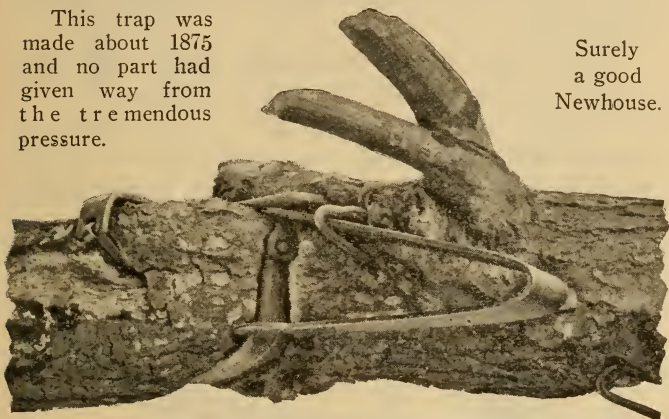
Much diversity of opinion obtains regarding the proportionate size of the pan or treadle. Some trappers like a large pan similar to that used in the Jump trap, but it is safe to say that the greater majority, especially among the old and experienced trappers, prefer the smaller sizes, and for obvious reasons. When an animal steps on a small pan he is caught to stay, but with a large one he may be "nipped" or his foot may be thrown out altogether. At any rate his education has been immensely advanced and it

will take a trapper with a "long head" to get him into a trap next time.

The pan should fit loosely in its bearing for as is well known, rusting increases the size of a piece of iron and as there are four surfaces to rust in a pan bearing, ample room must be left.

This trap was made about 1875 and no part had given way from the tremendous pressure.

Surely
a good
Newhouse.



LIMB GROWING THRU JAWS.

The dog or latch should be thick and narrow rather than wide, as presenting less surface for the animal to step on. It should be curved and pointed in such a way as to hold up the pan but so as to "go off" "easy" or "hard" in proportion to the size of the animal trapped for. This is a nice point for each trapper to decide for himself and it is this susceptibility to adjustment

by curving or straightening the dog that makes this old "trigger arrangement" superior to any other that has been invented. Of course, the cross and bottom pieces must be made in proportion to the other parts of the trap and the experienced trapper or inspector knows how to so bend them as to make them conform correctly therewith.

The chain should be strong enough to hold any animal for which the trap is designed.

It goes without saying that a good swivel is indispensable, as well as a reliable ring and wedge for fastening, and the "S" Hook sometimes furnished will be found very convenient as a means for attaching the trap to a drag.

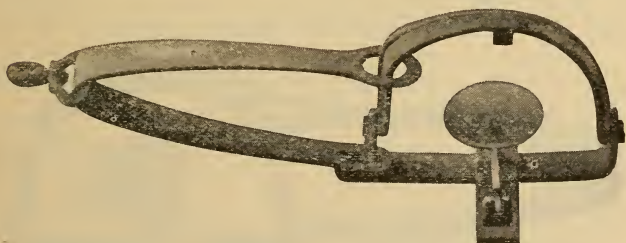
CHAPTER III.

A FEW FAILURES.



E present herewith a few photos taken from a collection of experimental traps and will endeavor to point out wherein these failed to prove themselves of practical value.

This trap was sometimes called the "Bob Tail" on account of its lack of a dog, and this feature was thought to be a valuable one as there was nothing to throw the ani-

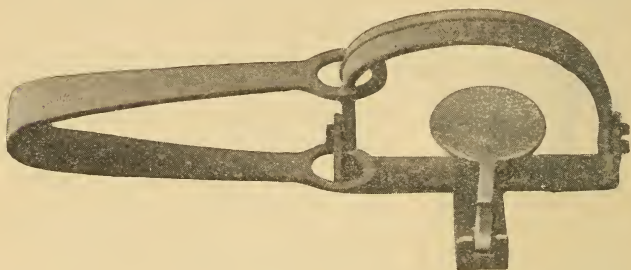


"BOB TAIL" TRAP.

mal's foot out, but it was found to be deficient in that it was not sensitive enough and it lacked any adjustability in its setting device.

This model was put on the market and sold for some time and seemed to be a very good

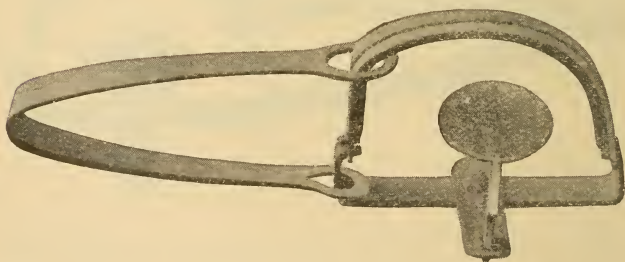
trap. It was discovered, however, that the bearing of the pan was too low down for a delicate



DEFECTIVE PAN BEARING.

set and also sometimes caused trouble by freezing in mud.

This trap was at one time thought to be good and was tried by many trappers. It was found,



THE ALL STEEL.

however, to be very faulty in many respects. The bearing of the pan lay flat in the mud and would freeze. The setting device lacked any kind of

adjustability and might either go off so hard that nothing could spring it or so easily that it would not stay set at all. The jaws which were made of thin sheet steel were not durable.

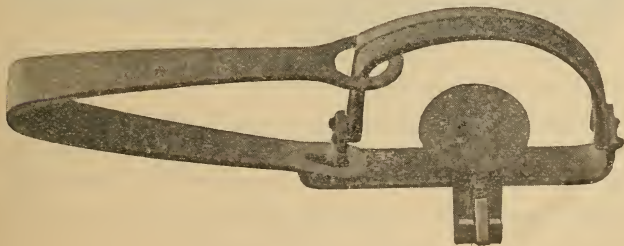
In this trap the method of attaching the pan was changed and the jaws were rendered more



THE MODIFIED ALL STEEL.

durable, but as the holding edges were made much thinner they were more liable to cut the animal's legs and on the whole the trap was not improved.

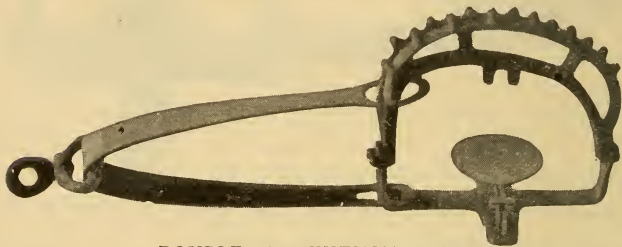
This trap was invented to do away with the



POOR SETTING DEVICE.

throwing out motion of the dog. It accomplished it, however, at such a sacrifice of other valuable features as to render it a useless invention. Its pan like others mentioned was liable to freeze up and it also lacked in easy adjustability and sensitiveness. Few of them were sold as they did not meet the approval of trappers of experience.

A Double Jaw Trap was made without a dog as shown by the setting device, although inge-



DOUBLE JAW WITHOUT DOG.

nious in construction, was not sensitive. The holding power of the double jaw was good, especially in a dry land set, as all know who have tried the Newhouse No. 91 or 91½.

This trap was designed by a man who thought it desirable to fasten the bait to the pan. Only a novice at trapping would think of doing such a thing as that, as drawing the animal's attention to the trap is sure to excite his suspicion and to catch him by the head is not desirable, even if possible. A common trap is quite certain

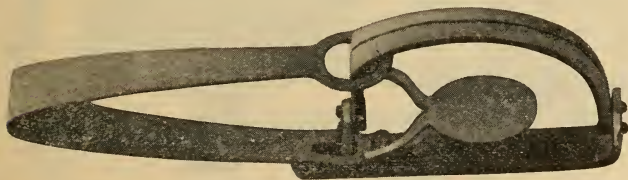
to only nip him and slip off. The trap as will be seen could be used also like a common one,



THE DUPLEX.

but presented a very awkward appearance. A few experienced trappers gave it a trial but none of them seemed to favor it.

This style was never put on the market. There have been invented quite a number of



THE "NO CROSS".

traps that have no cross piece but we do not know that any of them have been sold.

CHAPTER IV.

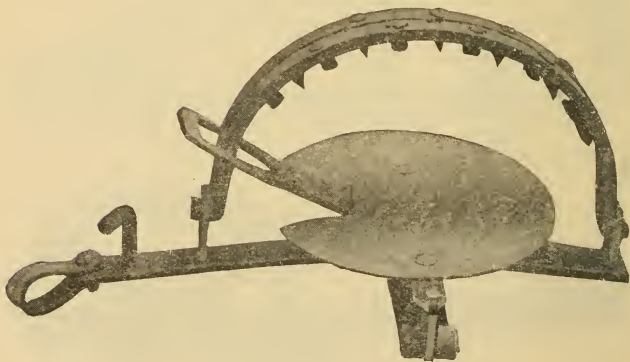
SOME EUROPEAN TRAPS.

German Fox Trap.



THE cut below represents a German Trap, as made at the present time, and there are several German makers of similar traps.

They are mostly hand made and vary slightly in style of construction from one another. The sizes cover all the different fur-



GERMAN FOX TRAP.

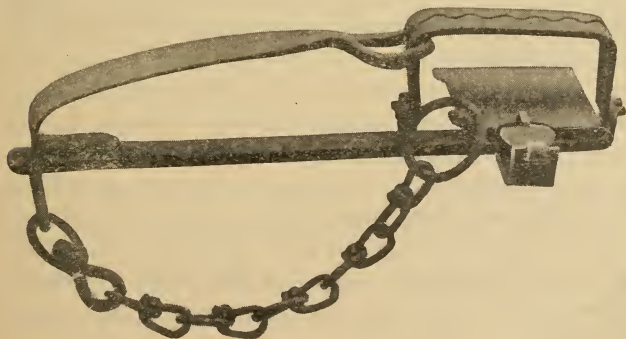
bearing animals, but the traps are clumsily made and much more expensive than those of American Manufacture.

It will be observed that the Pan is very large, in fact, it so nearly fills the space between the jaws, that there is quite a good chance that an animal would be thrown clear of the jaws when springing it. The setting device has no delicacy of adjustment and the fulcrum of the pan is so low down it would be very likely to freeze solid in the mud.

These traps are all provided with many large sharp teeth, and if the animal is caught high up they may do great injury to a valuable pelt.

English Rabbit Trap.

This remarkably clumsy looking concern is made in England and is used mostly in Australia and New Zealand for catching rabbits, which have become such a pest in those far away "Islands of the Sea."



ENGLISH RABBIT TRAP.

The Australian rabbit trappers are mostly of English descent and like their forefathers are very conservative in their ideas, so in spite of its many defects, they stick to the use of this antiquated machine.

Notice the size of the pan almost filling the opening in the jaw, width of the dog both tending to throw out the animal's foot. The sharp toothed jaws with thin cutting edges so apt to break the bone and help the rabbit to free itself,

Note also the short half spring which the trappers say will not endure more than one or two years use and which is stationary and sets high up, thus making it hard to conceal.

That there is need of something better than this to keep down these pests, may be believed, for it is stated that in spite of the fact that over two million dollars worth of their pelts and flesh are shipped to Europe annually, they are still on the increase.

They have lately made their appearance in regions hitherto free from them. Owing to the enormous fecundity, they soon take nearly complete possession of a place as it is calculated that one pair may increase to about two million in a couple of years. Until the trappers adopt some more efficient trap it is difficult to see how they are to make much headway against this scourge of the land.

CHAPTER V.

PROPER SIZES.

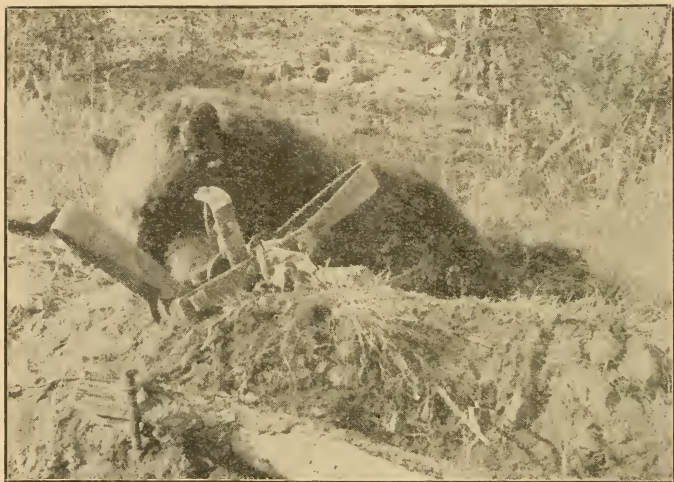


RAPPERS have done much, by pushing into the wilderness after fur-bearing animals and game, to advance civilization. Had the slower pursuits of logging,

farming, etc., been depended upon the United States and Canada today would not be nearly so far advanced as they are. While in sections, the larger game is gone yet there is in parts of the North, West and South, much good trapping territory that will pay the hardy trapper for years to come. Even in the more thickly settled districts, trapping can be made a good paying business if the correct sizes are used and trappers pay attention to the proper season to trap.

It seems that red fox, skunk and muskrat remain about as numerous in most sections as ever. In fact, the red fox in certain sections has only made its appearance of late years—since the country has become more thickly settled. Trappers in most sections can rest assured that they will have game to trap for years to come.

In the rapid development of the country steel traps have played a wonderful part. They have subdued the monster bear and have caught millions of the small fur-bearing animals, adding largely to the annual income of the trapper.



AWAITING THE TRAPPER.

Steel traps have been in use for more than one hundred years but for many years after invented they were so expensive that they were not generally used.

Of late years they have become cheaper, owing to the increased facilities of those great trap

manufacturers, the Oneida Community, who are always looking to trappers' interest by adding new and improved methods of manufacture as well as new traps to the extensive line already manufactured so that now their use has become general; in fact, the price is now so reasonable that the trapper, on his first expedition, can have a full supply. The professional trapper, who in the North, spends from seven to nine months in the woods has a supply of these traps, ranging from the smallest to the largest. His needs are such too that all of them are in use during the trapping season. A trapper can use from 50 to 250 traps.

Trappers, as a rule, know what game they are going to trap and consequently the number of each kind or size required. If he is after bear, otter or beaver, etc., he can not use and tend as many as if he were trapping smaller game, such as skunk, mink, opossum, raccoon and muskrat.

Traps are made in various sizes. The smallest, No. 0, is used for catching rats principally, while the largest, No. 6, is for the grizzly bear. Other sizes and the game to which they are adapted are :No. 1, known as the muskrat trap, but will hold mink, skunk, marten, etc. The jaws spread 4 inches. No. 81, size of No. 1 with web jaws for muskrat, mink and skunk. No.

91, size No. 1 with double jaws for muskrat and skunk. No. $1\frac{1}{2}$ mink rat, but will hold stronger game. The jaws spread $4\frac{7}{8}$ inches. No. $91\frac{1}{2}$, size of No. $1\frac{1}{2}$ with double jaws for mink and skunk. No. 2 fox trap, also used for coon. No. $2\frac{1}{2}$ otter with teeth; No. $24\frac{1}{2}$ same as No. $2\frac{1}{2}$ without teeth; No. 3 for otter and coyote; No. $3\frac{1}{2}$ extra large single spring otter with teeth; No. $31\frac{1}{2}$ same as No. $3\frac{1}{2}$ without teeth; No. 23 otter with clutch; No. 4 wolf and beaver; No. 14 beavers with offset jaw and teeth; No. 24 beaves with clutch; No. $4\frac{1}{2}$ timber wolves and mountain lion; No. 50 small bear; No. 150 small bear with offset jaw; No. 5 black bear; No. 6 grizzly bear. These are the well known Newhouse brand being by far the best trap made. This brand is put out in twenty-five different sizes.

The weight per dozen of Newhouse traps given below will give a better idea of the relative sizes of these traps: No. 0 weighs $6\frac{1}{2}$ pounds; No. 1, $9\frac{1}{4}$ pounds; No. $1\frac{1}{2}$, 13 pounds; No. 2, 17 pounds; No. 3, 23 pounds; No. 4, 33 pounds; No. $2\frac{1}{2}$, $23\frac{3}{4}$ pounds; No. $4\frac{1}{2}$, 98 pounds; No. 50, 132 pounds; No. 5, 135 pounds; No. 6, 504 pounds. A single trap of the No. 6 weighs 42 pounds and it can be readily seen that they are very strong.

The Newhouse is the strongest trap made and in fact the best for all fur-bearing animals.

WISCONSIN TRAPPER. FURS AND TRAPS.



A No. 1 Newhouse is equal in holding power to a No. 1½ of other brands.

The following letters, from trappers of experience will be found of interest as bearing on the subject of proper sizes:

"In buying your traps, do not get too large a trap for the animal you wish to catch. I know an old trapper that has trapped for forty years and all he uses for muskrat is a No. 0 Newhouse trap."

"A rat does not gnaw the foot off as many trappers will tell you, but the forefoot is very tender and as a rat always struggles very hard when caught, it does not take very long to twist the foot off if the trap is not set so the rat will drown. Different trappers have different ways of fastening the traps when trapping for rats."

"I use a No. 1 Newhouse trap for mink and a No. 1½ for skunk. I notice that the Newhouse people have a new trap called the "Webbed Jaw Trap". I think this an excellent trap to use in very cold weather."

"Yes, these otter traps are quite heavy, No. 3½ Newhouse, but are sure to hold," writes a New England trapper who is being accompanied by a young trapper. "You asked me what the raise plate was for; it is for the otter to hit as he passes over, as you see he is very short legged,

and the plate sets higher than the teeth on jaws of trap, and it will answer other purposes, as you will see when you set them. These otter and bear traps are allright and the animal that steps on the pan will stay or leave a foot. We have 9 otter and 4 bear traps. Let us look at fox traps. We have 25 "jumpers", No. $2\frac{1}{2}$; these are right for dry sets. Here are 25 No. 3 Newhouse for water sets. No. 2 Newhouse is just right for coon and fisher."

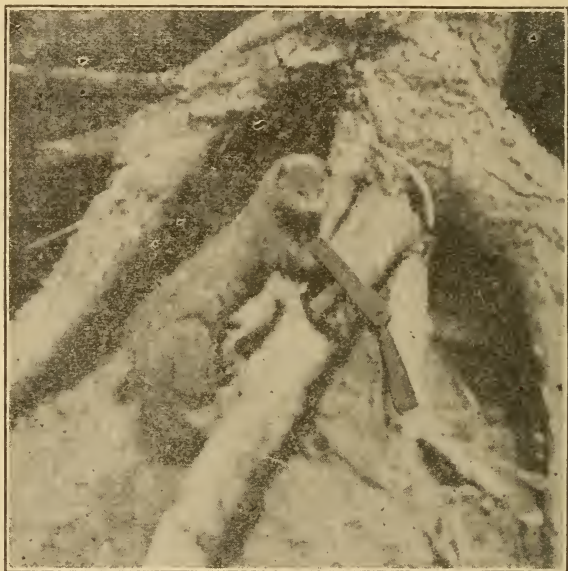
Trappers in stating the size traps that they use for a certain animal show quite a difference. Some use a No. 1 Newhouse for coon while others use the No. 2 and as this is a double spring, the holding power is fully three times as much as the No. 1.

In the Northern states where the coon grows much larger than in the South and Southwest, the No. 2 Newhouse is the trap. In the South the No. $1\frac{1}{2}$ Newhouse is a good mink trap as is also the No. $1\frac{1}{2}$ Victor and No. 2 Oneida Jump.

The proper size trap to use for a certain animal, varies under different conditions. If the trapper is reasonably certain that no other species of animal than the one trapped for frequents the place then the best size for the animal being set for is the trap to use.

On the other hand, should the trapper have out some traps for skunk, which need not be

larger than No. 1 of the best or Newhouse variety, and any of the dens are visited by fox a larger trap should be used. If trapping for rats and you come to "rat signs" and also where



MINK, TRAPPED UNDER AN OLD ROOT.

there are coon and mink signs, a trap large enough to hold either should be set.


If blind or trail sets are made, it is well to have the trap sufficiently strong for the largest

animal using it. Often different animals use the same trail or path leading from one den to another or to a log across a stream, etc.

Elsewhere a complete description of the various makes and sizes of traps to use is given and also full instructions about setting, fastening, etc. This embraces the view of the manufacture, the trapper and of the author who has had years of experience and should be of great value to inexperienced users of Steel Traps.

CHAPTER VI.

NEWHOUSE TRAPS.

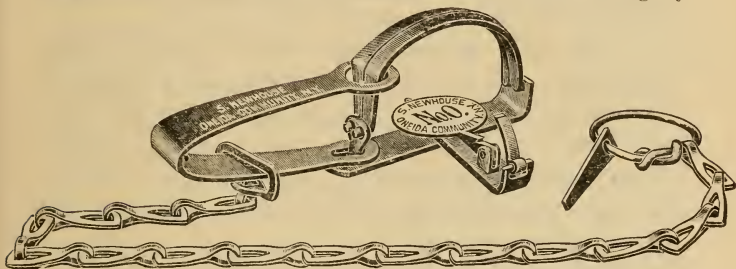
 N or about 1823 the first Newhouse traps were made. At that early date only a few of the smaller sizes were manufactured but these have been added to until now the famous Newhouse trap is manufactured in twenty-five different sizes. The smallest, No. 0, for rats and the largest, No. 6, for grizzly bear. These with the various intermediate sizes are adapted to catching all varieties of the fur-bearing and game animals of the world. In fact, it is said that the No. 6 will hold any living animal excepting the elephant.

Under this heading the various makes of this trap are described; excepting the Double and Webbed Jaw, which are described in another chapter.

Considerable of the description as given here is from the trap catalog of the Oneida Community, Oneida, N. Y., manufacturers of the Newhouse trap. For we believe that inasmuch as they have for more than half a century manufactured traps (during which time they have kept up a large correspondence with trappers

in all parts of North America) much weight should be given their views.

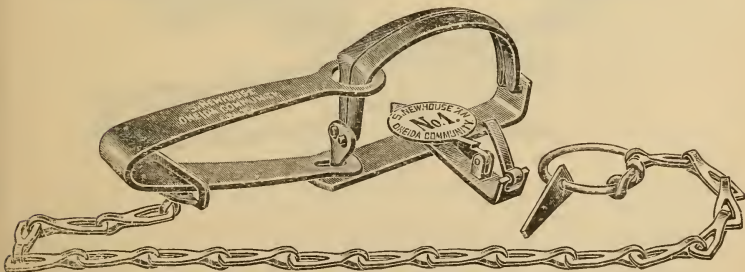
This, the No. 0, is the smallest size made. Spread of Jaws, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. It is used largely



NO. 0, NEWHOUSE TRAP.

for catching gophers and house rats. It has a sharp grip and will hold larger game, but should not be overtaxed.

This, the No. 1, has a spread of jaws of 4 inches. This trap is used for catching muskrat and other small animals and sold in greater

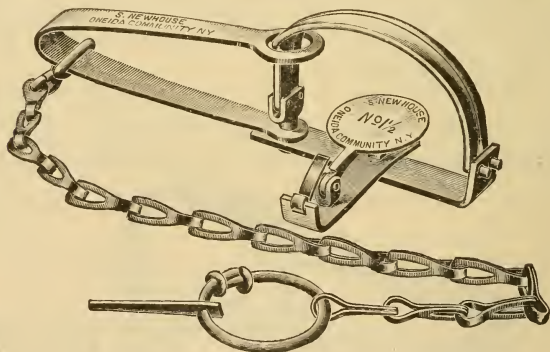


NO. 1, NEWHOUSE TRAP.

numbers than any other size. Its use is well understood by professional trappers and it is the most serviceable size for catching skunks, weasels, rats and such other animals as visit poultry houses and barns.

This trap is one that can be used to good advantage for other small fur-bearing animals. Trappers use large numbers of this size for muskrat, mink, opossum, civet and marten. Fox, coon, lynx and wild cat are often caught in this trap but we do not advise its use for these large animals.

This trap, No. $1\frac{1}{2}$, has a spread of jaws of $4\frac{7}{8}$ inches. This size is called the "Mink Trap"



NO. $1\frac{1}{2}$, OR MINK TRAP.

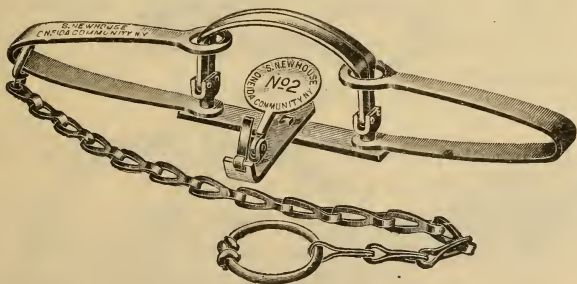
but it is, however, suitable for catching woodchucks, skunks, coon, etc. Professional trap-

pers often use it for catching foxes. It is very convenient in form and is strong and reliable.

In some states where skunks grow very large, such as in parts of Nebraska, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and the Dakotas, as well as other Northwestern sections this trap is much used.

One advantage in using a trap of this size for mink is that they are caught high up and if by one of the front legs they are pretty sure to be dead before the arrival of the trapper. If used for mink at a water set, the animal generally soon drowns.

This trap, the No. 2, has a spread of jaws of $4\frac{7}{8}$ inches, being the same as No. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$, but hav-

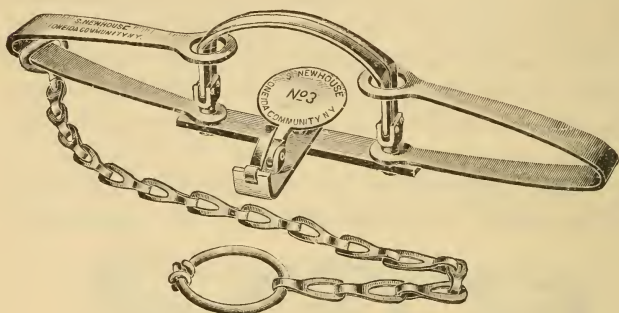


NO. 2, OR FOX TRAP.

ing two springs, it is, of course, much stronger. This size is commonly known as the "Fox Trap." This trap is often used for taking badger, fisher and coyote.

Trappers sometimes remove one spring and use it for large coon, woodchuck and even for fox as some think with two springs the trap is too strong.

This, the No. 3, has a spread of jaws of $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches. It is designated as the "Otter Trap."



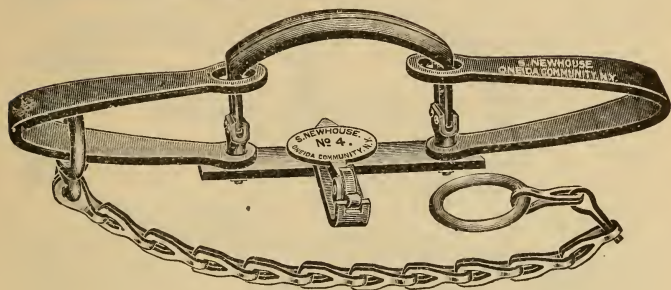
NO. 3, OR OTTER TRAP.

It is a very powerful trap and will hold almost any game smaller than a bear.

This trap is used for taking beaver and also to some extent for small wolves and coyotes.

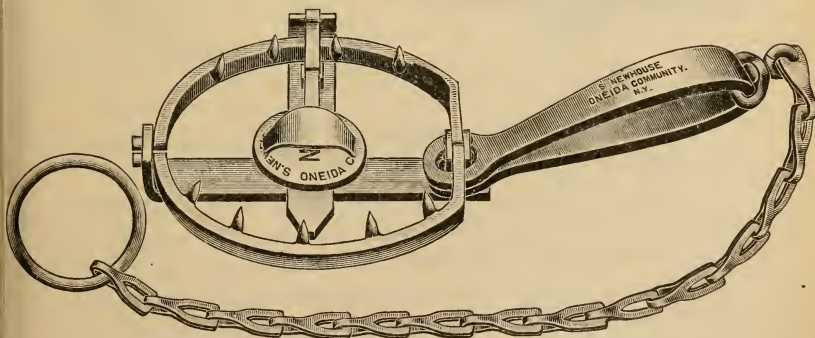
This, the No. 4, has a spread of jaws of $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches. This is the regular form of Wolf Trap. It is longer than the No. 3 and has one inch greater spread of jaws. It is a favorite with those who trap and hunt for a living in the Northwest and Canada. It is extensively used

for trapping the wolves and coyotes in the western stock raising regions.



NO. 4, OR WOLF TRAP.

This, the No. $2\frac{1}{2}$, has a spread of jaws of $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches. This is a single spring trap as shown. In some localities the otter grows to an unusual size, with great proportional

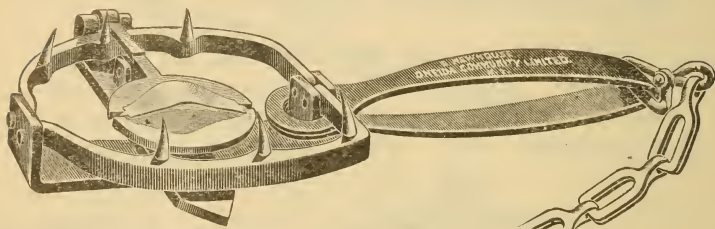


NO. $2\frac{1}{2}$, OR OTTER TRAP WITH TEETH.

strength, so that the manufacturers have been led to produce an especially large and strong pattern. The parts are heavier than the No. 3, the spread of jaws is greater and the spring stiffer.

The jaws are equipped with teeth to keep the otter from getting free when once caught. The pan is also furnished with a raised plate which can be taken off if desired.

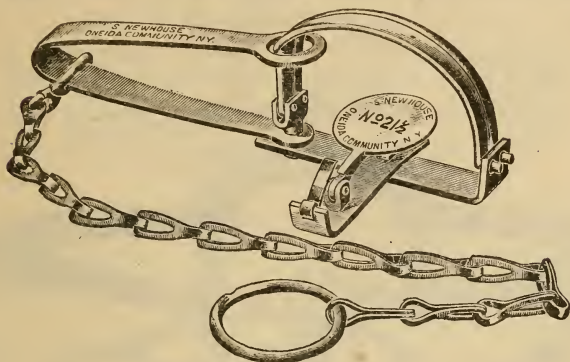
This, the No. 3½, has a spread of jaws of 5 inches. This trap is for otter, but is used more especially for catching them on their



NO. 3½, OR EXTRA STRONG OTTER TRAP.

“slides.” For this purpose a thin raised plate of steel is adjusted to the pan so that when the trap is set the plate will be a trifle higher than the teeth on the jaws. The spring is very powerful, being the same as used on the No. 4 Newhouse Trap. If desired, the raised plate can be detached, making the trap one of general utility.

Single Spring No. 21½ has a spread of jaws of 5¼ inches. This trap is the same as No. 2½



NO. 21½, WITHOUT TEETH.

but is without teeth or Raised Plate as some trappers prefer it in this style.

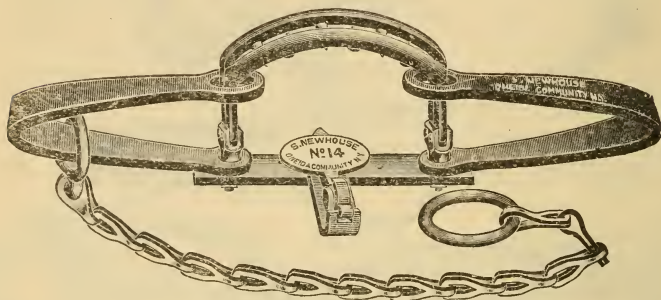
No. 31½ Newhouse Trap is also a single spring being same as No. 3½ but without Teeth or Raised Plate. Spread of jaws 6½ inches.

These traps, Nos. 21½ and 31½, are the largest smooth jaw, single spring sizes that are made. Professional trappers will find them especially valuable when on a long trapping line, as they are more compact and easier to secrete than double spring traps. The springs on these traps are made extra heavy.

The No. 21½ is practically a single spring No. 3 and the No. 31½ a single spring No. 4.

These traps are used for such animals as otter, beaver, wolf, wolverine, fisher and have been known to catch and hold Mountain Lion.

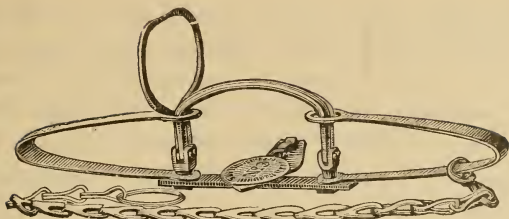
This trap is known as No. 14 and has a spread of jaws of $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches. This trap is the same in size as No. 4 Wolf but has heavier and



OFFSET JAW BEAVER TRAP.

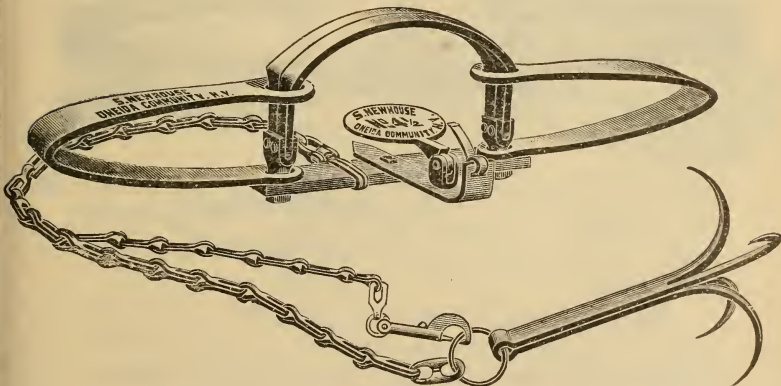
stiffer springs and offset jaws, which allow the springs to raise higher when the animal's leg is in the trap, and it is furnished with teeth sufficiently close to prevent the animal from pulling its foot out. The weight of this style is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ pounds each.

This trap is known as "Detachable Clutch Trap." The trap can be used with or without it. It is made in two sizes Nos. 23 and 24. No. 23 known as the "Otter Clutch" has a spread of jaws of $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches; No. 24 known as the "Beaver Clutch" has a spread of jaws of $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches.



DETACHABLE CLUTCH TRAP.

This trap is known as the No. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ or "Newhouse Special Wolf Trap." It was put on the market to meet the demands of trappers for

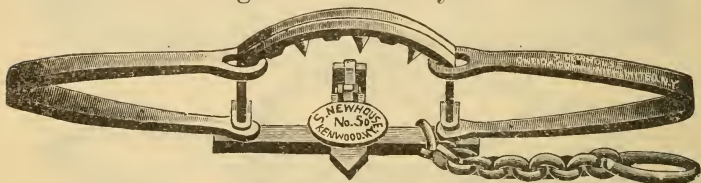


NEWHOUSE SPECIAL WOLF TRAP.

a new model of the Newhouse Trap especially designed for capturing the large timber wolves and mountain lions of the stock raising sections of the West.

This trap has a spread of jaws of 8 inches. It is substantially made thruout and is provided with a pronged "drag," a heavy snap, an extra heavy steel swivel and a chain, five feet long, warranted to hold 2,000 pounds. This trap complete with chain and "drag" weighs about 9 pounds.

This trap is known as No. 50, spread of jaws 9 inches. It is intended for catching small sized bears. In design it is exactly like the stand-



SMALL BEAR TRAP.

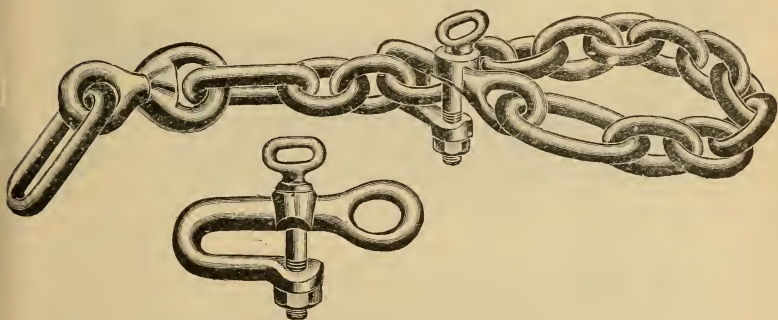
ard No. 5 Bear Trap, only that the parts are all somewhat smaller. Weight, $11\frac{1}{4}$ pounds each. This trap is also used for catching Mountain Lion.

This trap is known as No. 150, spread of jaws, 9 inches. It is similar to No. 50, excepting that the jaws are offset, making a space five-eighths inch between them. This allows the springs to come up higher when the bear's foot is in the trap and thus secure a better grip. The chance of breaking the bones in the foot are also lessened. Weight, $11\frac{1}{4}$ pounds each.

they have never heard of anything getting out of it when once caught. It is often called the "Great Bear Tamer."

This trap is also used in Asia and Africa for catching lions and tigers. In fact the trap will hold any animal with the exception of the elephant and it will hold even that animal excepting possibly the larger ones.

This cut illustrates Bear Trap Chain Clevis and Bolt, intended as a substitute for the ring on the end of the trap chain, when desired.

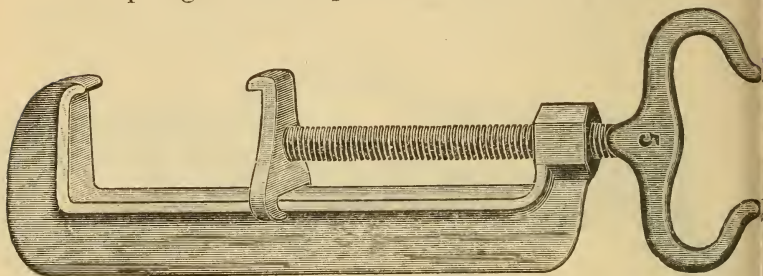


BEAR TRAP CHAIN CLEVIS.

With this clevis a loop can be made around any small log or tree without the trouble of cutting to fit the ring. The chain is made five feet long suitable for any clog and the prices of bear traps fitted with it are the same as with the regular short chain and ring.

There is danger attached to setting the large traps when alone in addition to its being rather difficult, especially in cold weather, when the fingers are stiff. Should the trapper be in a boat the setting is still more difficult.

A clamp (as shown) applied to each spring will, by a few turns of the thumb-screws, bend the springs to their places, so that the pan may



STEEL TRAP SETTING CLAMP.

be adjusted without difficulty. No. 4 clamp can be used on any trap smaller than No. 4½. No. 5 and 6 are strong clamps, carefully made and especially adapted to setting the large traps Nos. 4½, 50, 150, 5, 15 and 6. They do away with the inconvenience and dangerous use of levers. With clamps a trapper can easily and safely set these powerful traps. These clamps also come handy about the camp for other purposes.

CHAPTER VII.

DOUBLE AND WEB JAW TRAPS.



O trapper should go into the woods without providing himself with an outfit of traps to meet any of the varying emergencies that are likely to arise. For instance, along a deep stream it is generally easy to arrange a common trap so that by drowning the animal it will answer every purpose, but in a very small or shallow stream this is sometimes a difficult thing to accomplish. In such a case if the trapper has provided himself with a Webbed or Double Jawed Trap his chances of finding the game awaiting him on his return will be greatly increased.

For a dry land set, especially on skunk, the Double Jaw will be found very effective. The fact that it catches very high up and also entirely prevents self-amputation is greatly in its favor.

For foxes, which are often taken by the dry land method, the Double Jawed of a size corresponding to the regular No. 1½ is getting to be a very popular trap.

So, as we said before, each trapper, tho relying mainly on the old and well tried lines, should provide himself with a few of these odd styles and thus add greatly to his versatility of resources, that he may compete successfully with the ever increasing cunning of the many four-footed fur bearers of stream and forest.

Trappers for years have contended that certain animals would gnaw out of traps, especially where the bone was broken by the jaws and the flesh had become numb from the pressure or from cold.

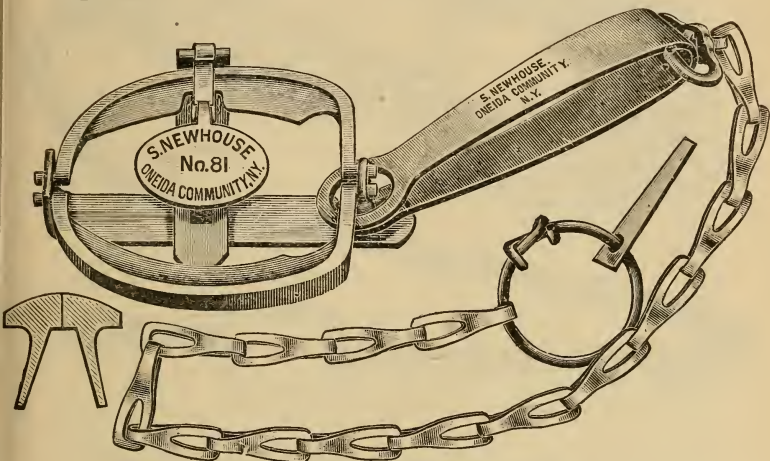
It is known that skunks especially will gnaw at that portion of the foot or leg below jaws of trap. Where trappers have a long line of traps and cannot visit them every day they thus lose a number of animals.

The Webbed and Double Jaw prevent the gnawing out from the fact that the animal can only gnaw to the lower jaw or web and is not able to get at the flesh between the jaws or under the web.

Another animal that these traps are especially adapted for is the muskrat. This animal's legs especially the front ones, are very tender (both bone and flesh). A trap that breaks the bone, (unless the animal is soon drowned) may escape by the flesh of the leg twisting off in its

endeavors to get free. Muskrats do not gnaw off their feet as some suppose.

This, the Webbed Jaw, known as No. 81 has spread of Jaws of four inches. This is one of the

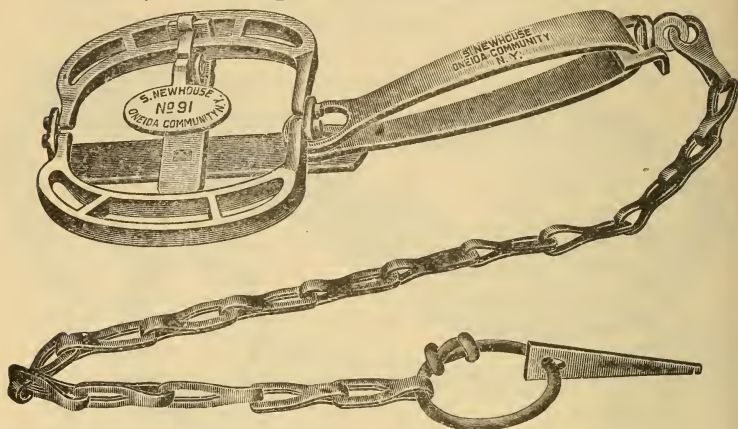


NO. 81, OR WEBBED JAW TRAP.

Newhouse makes and corresponds in size to the regular No. 1. Newhouse.

If trappers will observe the cross section of the jaws, as illustrated at the left, it is plain the animal can only gnaw off its leg at a point quite a distance below the meeting edges of the jaws. The flesh above the jaws as well as below will swell making it impossible for the animal to pull the leg stump out of the trap.

This, the Double Jaw, is manufactured in two sizes; namely, 91 with spread of jaws of $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches; No. $91\frac{1}{2}$ with spread of jaws of $6\frac{1}{4}$



NO. 91, OR DOUBLE JAW TRAP.

inches. The No. 91 correspondent in size to the regular No. 1 Newhouse, while the No. $91\frac{1}{2}$ corresponds to the regular No. $1\frac{1}{2}$ Newhouse with the exception of the jaws.

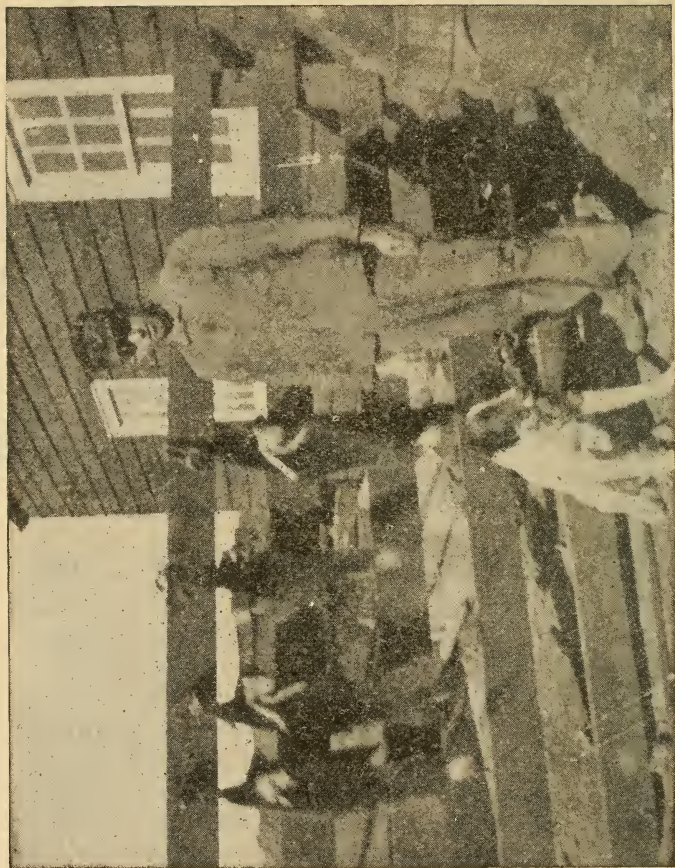
The Double Jaw traps are so constructed that they catch the animal high up on the leg. It is no uncommon occurrence for the trapper to find mink and other small animals dead when caught in this trap by the fore foot. It is supposed that the circulation of blood thus retarded stops the action of the heart.

These traps are set the same as other steel traps, and directions given elsewhere apply to these as well.

While the Webbed and Double Jaw traps were little known prior to 1905, trappers have been quick to see the advantage derived from using them. The Double Jaw has taken even better than the Webbed Jaw.

The manufacturers had expected skunk trappers largely to be the buyers and this would include roughly speaking the section east of the Rocky Mountains, south of Manitoba and Quebec and north of the States bordering on the Gulf of Mexico. But the demand sprung up from all parts of America. This shows that trappers are finding these traps good ones for other animals than skunks and muskrats for which they were especially designed.

The fact that trappers found out about these traps so quickly is due largely to that up-to-date trappers' magazine — Hunter-Trader-Trapper, published at Columbus, Ohio, and which reaches trappers in all parts of America. The Oneida Community, Ltd., Oneida, N. Y., manufacturers of these traps were and are liberal users of advertising space in the Hunter-Trader-Trapper to let trappers know of improvements in the trap line that are of value to them.



A MORNING CATCH OF SKUNK.

If you have never tried any of the No. 81, which is the Webbed Jaw, or Nos. 91 or 91½, the Double Jaw, we feel sure that you are not familiar with traps that will increase your catch. We believe that all trappers should have at least a few of these traps.

CHAPTER VIII.

VICTOR AND HAWLEY & NORTON TRAPS.



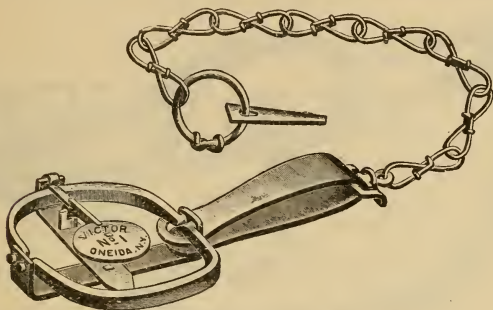
IN the Victor is a good trap considering the cheap price at which it is sold and as the manufacturers say: "Is the most popular trap in the world."

While professional trappers use largely the Newhouse, yet in thickly settled sections and where trappers are constantly bothered by trap "lifters," the Victor is much used. While the trap is sold at a very low price, yet it is the best trap manufactured in the regular or long spring trap, with the exception of Newhouse, or H. & N.

The Victor is manufactured in six sizes and each is adapted to the following use: No. 0, rat or gopher; No. 1, muskrat; No. $1\frac{1}{2}$, mink; No. 2, fox; No. 3, otter; No. 4, beaver. The Nos. 0, 1 and $1\frac{1}{2}$ are single spring; Nos. 2, 3 and 4, double. The illustration showing No. 1 represents also Nos. 0 and $1\frac{1}{2}$ as they are different only in size. The illustration showing No. 4 represents Nos. 2 and 3 also as they are different only in size.

These traps are not so strong in any part as

the Newhouse and trappers should bear this in mind when setting for the various animals.



NO. 1, VICTOR TRAP.

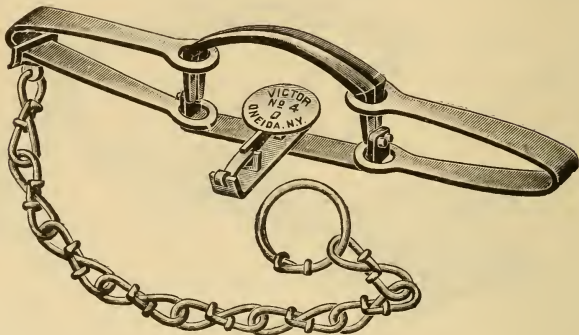
The No. 1½ known as the mink trap is also a splendid muskrat trap, having greater spread of jaws than the No. 1 and being heavier than the No. 1 is just right to catch and drown rats.

The Nos. 2, 3 and 4 are all double spring and made for fox, otter and beaver and while trappers catch large numbers of these animals in Victor traps, yet the more experienced ones prefer the Newhouse traps even at the advanced price.

The Victor is used largely for taking the smaller fur bearers. It is sold in large quantities in all parts of the United States and Canada.

The Hawley & Norton is made only in six

sizes: Nos. 0, 1 and $1\frac{1}{2}$ single spring; Nos. 2, 3, and 4, double spring.



NO. 4, VICTOR TRAP.

A lighter grade of stock is used in manufacturing these traps so that they can be made somewhat cheaper than the Newhouse and altho not as strong, they are a good reliable trap.

CHAPTER IX.

JUMP TRAPS.



WHILE the Jump Trap has been in use in the Eastern part of the United States for upwards of fifty years, principally in the New England and Sea Coast States, the use of these traps in all parts of the country did not become general until a few years ago.

The trap derives its name "Jump" from the fact that the spring is so arranged that when the trap is touched off or sprung by an animal or otherwise, it "Jumps", thus catching the animal high up on the leg. Trappers that have not used these traps express doubts of their "Jumping" and catching high on the animal's leg, but hundreds of letters received by the manufacturers from trappers and also published in the Hunter-Trader-Trapper prove that they do "Jump."

The manufacturers claim these points in their favor. They are somewhat lighter than the regular form of double spring traps and the trapper going far into the woods can carry a greater number; they set much flatter; can be set in

smaller space; springs are out of the way as no spring extends beyond the jaws; pans are large so that no animal can step between the jaws without springing the trap. The traps are set much the same as other steel traps.

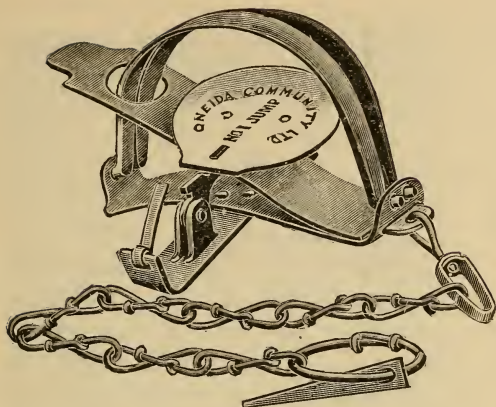
The B. & L. trap is manufactured in six sizes, viz; Nos. 0, 1 and 2, single spring; Nos. 2½, 3 and 4 double spring.

Some years ago the Oneida Community, Ltd., Oneida, N. Y., began manufacturing a "Jump" trap which is known as the "Oneida Jump". This trap has a new style of jaws. The old style was made of thin steel whereas these have full, wide-faced jaws, so that the chances of breaking the bone in the leg are lessened.

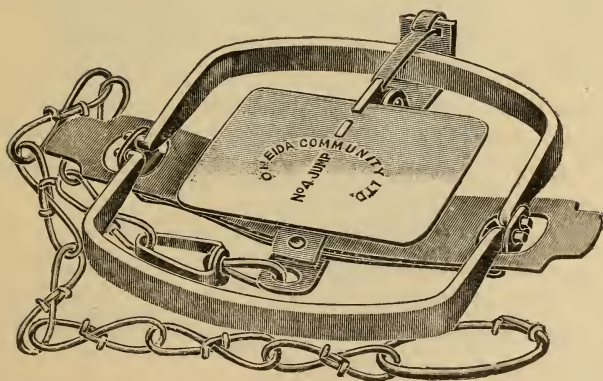
This trap has a chain attachment, fastening at the end of the jaw opposite the spring, so that when the animal is caught and struggles to get free the foot is only gripped the tighter. The trapper, however, can fasten the chain on the end of the crossbar, opposite dog, as there is a hole drilled there for that purpose.

The "Oneida Jump" is manufactured in nine sizes. This illustration shows a No. 1. It is a single spring as are also No. 0 and 2; the other sizes have double springs.

These sizes, No. 0 to No. 4, are adapted to catching the various animals with the exception



NO. 1, ONEIDA JUMP.



NO. 4, ONEIDA JUMP.

of timber wolves and bears, altho the larger sizes are used for taking the coyote and small wolf.

The sizes adapted for the various animals are: No. 0, rat and gopher; No. 1, muskrat; No. 2, mink; No. $2\frac{1}{2}$, coon or skunk; No. $12\frac{1}{2}$, same as $2\frac{1}{2}$, with teeth; No. 3, fox or otter; No. 13, same as No. 3, with teeth; No. 4, otter or wild cat; No. 14, same as No. 4, with teeth.

The No. 2 is a splendid mink trap from the fact that it takes little room and can be set in many places where the end spring cannot be placed to advantage. The No. 2 for mink and the No. $2\frac{1}{2}$ for coon are much used at log sets as they lie so flat that but little cutting is required.

The No. 2 is also coming into use as a marten trap especially for log and notched tree sets.

The arrangement of the springs is such that the ends only extend about an inch beyond the jaws so that the double spring sizes even, do not take nearly as much room to set as the regular or end spring trap.

It makes no difference what kind of a set is to be made — water, land or snow, the fact that this make of trap takes but little room and lies very flat, should not be lost sight of. This sometimes is quite an advantage.

The most successful trappers are those who use some of the various styles of traps for there



A "JUMP" TRAP TRAPPER.

are certain sets where each can be used to the best advantage.

The "Jump Traps" are moderate priced and being light and strong for their size, trappers are taking to them, finding that for certain sets they have no equal. No trapper should start out for the season without some "Jumps."

CHAPTER X.

TREE TRAPS.

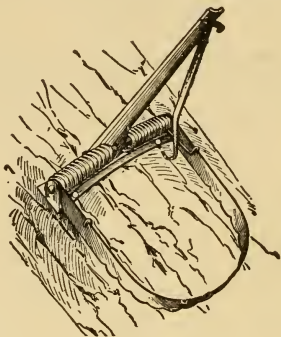


EXPERIENCED trappers fully appreciate the importance of having a trap that when the animal is caught, it is caught to stay, and instantly killed instead of being held a captive by the foot or leg.

Many fully realize the importance of a human trap that will accomplish this, and have found many good points in the Tree Trap. Most practical trappers know that one of the most successful ways to set steel traps for many kinds of animals, is to suspend the bait about two feet over the trap, compelling the animal to step on the pan of the trap in order to get at it. This may be very good, but in case of a heavy snow fall, a set of this kind means that your trap is snowed under, and you not only experience great difficulty in locating your trap, but often are unable to do so at all until spring, or when the snow disappears.

In order that readers may fully understand how the Tree Trap is used, two sketches are shown. One showing the trap set, with a mink approaching; the other one having caught Mr. Coon, and killed him instantly, not damaging the

fur. This trap can be securely nailed to a tree, stump or stake, and should be at least two feet from the ground, though always in sight and



THE TREE TRAP.

easy to get to. In case of deep snow all you have to do is to bend the nails around, loosening the trap and renail it a few feet higher up.

How to Set.

If possible find a suitable tree over a den or close to a runway. Leave the trap set with the safety hook holding it (don't spring the trap unless nailed securely), place against the tree, two or three feet from the ground; mark the distance between the lower notches in the base of trap on the tree. Then drive two nails (six or eight-

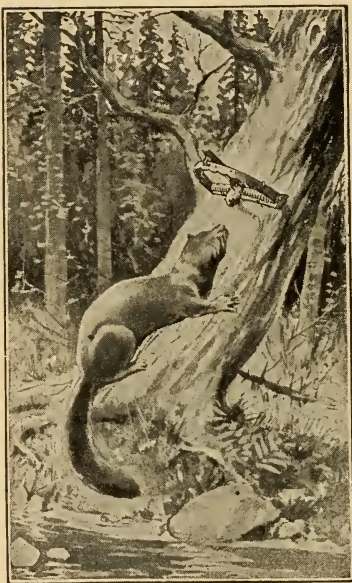
penny will do) leaving enough of the nail head so the two bottom notches will hook over the nail heads tightly, then drive the nails in the two upper notches as far as they will go. This will fasten the base of the trap tightly to the tree, which is important.

Next bait the hook; seeing that the bait is secure; some tie it on with a string or thread. Now release the safety hook and your trap is ready. Some trappers prefer to throw some dead grass, leaves or boughs on top of the trap, which help to conceal it, this is a good idea. A piece of a rabbit, squirrel, bird or chicken makes a splendid bait. Fish is good for mink.

One great advantage of Tree Trap over many other traps is that when it catches the animal, it not only holds, but kills it. While traps should be looked after every other day in good trapping weather; with the Tree Trap twice a week will do without the game escaping, as is often the case with common steel traps, but you cannot afford to take chances. Of course, in very warm weather, traps should be looked at more frequently. On the other hand, during very severe weather, the trapper need not make the rounds more than once a week. This is important to the trapper who has a long line of traps out.

Trappers should by all means have some Tree

Traps among their outfit, in fact, as already mentioned, the most successful trappers have a supply of all kinds of traps.



TREE TRAP SET AND ANIMAL
APPROACHING.



ANIMAL KILLED IN TREE TRAP.

The Tree Trap does not weigh as much as a steel trap required to catch the same size animals, and when set secured by safety hook, they are compact; occupying very little space. These

traps are made by the Animal Trap Co., Lititz, Pa., and are highly recommended for marten.

Tree Traps are manufactured in four sizes adapted to catching the following animals: No. 0 the smallest size, for weazel; No. 1, for mink, marten, and civet; No. 2, for skunk and opossum; No. 3, for coon, fisher and wild cat.

This trap can be used to splendid advantage during deep snows as it can easily be set against the side of a tree at any height the trapper desires, thus proving what has been said before, that the most successful trapper has some of all kinds of traps.

The greatest field for the Tree Trap is the North, yet trappers in the Central and Southern States are already using them to a considerable extent for coon and opossum; also for skunk and mink.

CHAPTER XI.

STOP THIEF.



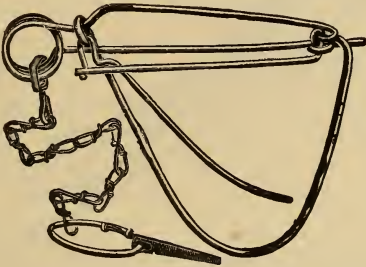
TOP THIEF TRAPS are manufactured by the Animal Trap Co. A great deal has been said for and against this trap, but like all traps, one must know how to use them. Trappers that have taken the trouble to learn how to set them report good results. A great many that were quick to condemn them at first now praise them highly.

The manufacturers say the No. 1 is for squirrels; No. 2, for mink and marten; No. 3, for skunk and opossum; No. 3½ for fox and raccoon; No. 4, for wolves. But we think the larger sizes should be used for mink and skunk.

In trapping for mink, fish, bird or muskrat is the best bait but a hungry mink will eat almost any kind of fresh meat. When convenient, scatter dry grass or leaves over the trap but do not cover the hole. If no hole is found, make one or two in earth or snow.

Fasten the trap with a chain or piece of wire to a stake or drag of some kind, when near the

water. No fastening is needed if there is no water near. Find where the raccoon, skunk, civet cat, opossum, etc., frequent and set the trap in the same way as for mink. Bait with



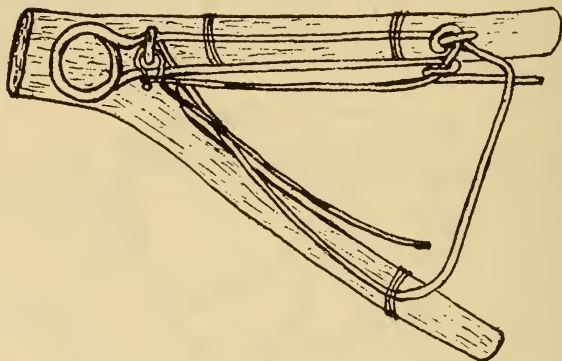
STOP THIEF TRAP.

bird, chicken and the like. Oil the working parts of trap to prevent rust.

The Stop Thief Trap is thought very highly of by some trappers for use in a peculiar situation and like the New Tree Trap, tho not as yet well known, it is likely to prove a very effective machine in the hands of men who know how to use it.

I procure a crotched stick, writes a Pennsylvania trapper, the prongs of which are about $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and of sufficient spread to fit the trap with which they are to be used. I send a drawing which will make it plainer than a page of description. The best way of set-

ting a trap thus equipped will readily suggest itself according to the place selected.



METHOD OF SETTING STOP THIEF TRAP.

When setting at a hole which the animal is known to be in, the wood part or crotch may be placed next the hole or ground and there will not be much of the iron of the trap exposed to the animal as it comes out. Or, if setting where the animal is expected to come and enter the hole, the trap would be best placed with the wood out. With the latter set one would have to be careful to place the trap so that nothing would interfere with the working.

Traps thus rigged will, of course, weigh more than the bare trap and are more bulky and cumbersome, but where one is trapping in a timbered country the crotch need not be cut until upon

the ground where it is to be used, or if in a section where timber is scarce, could be placed beforehand where it is to be used, just as one would do with stakes, rocks, drags, or clogs, spring poles and the like, when setting steel jaw traps. Dry timber could be used instead of green which would lighten materially. However, I prefer the heavier, as I think it holds the trap more firmly in place, thus requiring less fastening. Small wire is best to fasten the trap to the crotch as mice and squirrels will cut twine.

While I feel that the Stop Thief will never begin to equal any steel jaw trap, I think there are times when it may be used to advantage, and I expect to try mine again the coming season and expect to do better with them than last season.

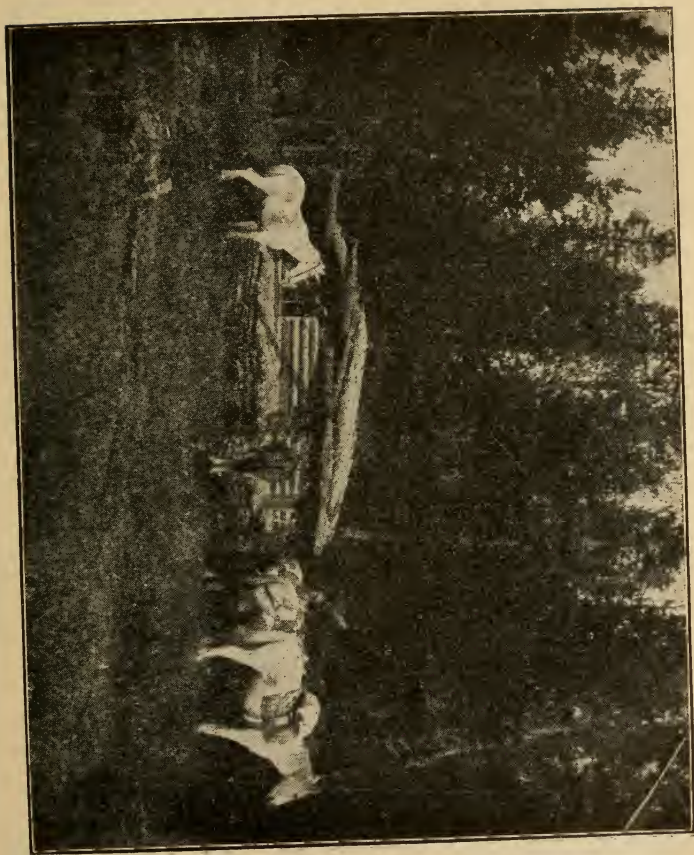
CHAPTER XII.

WIDE SPREADING JAWS.



CCASIONALLY I see in H-T-T, trappers advocating a large spreading trap, writes an experienced Canadian trapper, and some even go so far as to invite the trap manufacturers to make still wider ones than are now on the market. My experience in trapping, which was varied and extended over a number of years, is that it's a mistake to have a trap that catches the animals too high up.

The best and most enduring hold a trap can have on an animal is the paw or just above where it joins the bottom of the leg. I have found this with beaver, foxes, marten, lynx, bear, and in fact all animals I have caught. Just above and the paw itself is a mass of sinews and muscle enveloped with a stronger skin than any part of the leg, and therefore must give more resistance. I have found a fox that was caught in a No. 2 Newhouse after three nights' struggle as secure as if newly seized. The jaws having closed securely across the thick part of the forepaw.



TRAPPER'S CABIN AND PACK HORSES.

Again from a shortness of a proper sized trap I once set a No. 4, for a fox. The fox was caught between midnight and daylight, and when I visited the trap at the latter limit (six o'clock), it was high time, for another half hour of struggling and the fox would have been clear and away. The jaws had caught him half way up the foreleg and snapped the bone like a pipe shank. With his twisting and leaping there only remained a strip of skin and one tendon that kept him prisoner.

For mink I have found a No. 0 trap, if carefully set with proper precaution, is as good and lucky as a No. 1 or $1\frac{1}{2}$ trap, as some trappers advocate. I used a bunch on a considerable sized lake last fall. The lake had numerous small creeks and rivers falling into it. At the junction of these with the lake I set my traps. They were all No. 0 selected on account of their lightness. As there was a long carry to get to the lake from a traveled route and added to the canoe, my gun, blanket and provisions, the traps were somewhat of a consideration, and I therefore took the one of less weight. I made two visits to the lake before it froze and got twenty mink, one marten and a female fisher.

When I made a water set I saw that the bank outside went down pretty bold and I always tied a stone to the trap and thus insured the animal

drowning. Where I set on land without fail I attached the chain to a tossing pole, thereby preventing the fur being damaged by mice or the animal being eaten by some other. Some may question the possibility of such small traps being for any length of time in order as a water set, but I must explain. The lake was of considerable size and the season the latter part of October. Such a lake at that season of the year is not subject to any fluctuations in the height of water.

I may say in conclusion about this particular sized trap that on that trapping tour I only lost one mink, I found the trap sprung with a single toe in the jaws. The trap had been a dry set one, and by reading the signs I found some snow had melted and dripped from an overhanging branch on to the junctions of the jaws. This had frozen (the trap being in the shade) and prevented its usual activity. As a consequence it only caught on as the mink was in the act of lifting his foot, so I was satisfied it was the circumstances and not the fault of the trap that caused the missing of this mink.

Another undesirable point about any trap is to have the springs too powerful for its intended use. One only wants a trap's jaws to close up sudden enough and to hold what it catches secure against any possibility of the animal withdrawing its foot. Once you have this it's all

that's required or necessary. A trap with springs with a strength out of reason is awkward and vexatious to open, and when the animal is caught goes on with its continued pressure until the jaws of their own action almost sever the paw or leg, and the animal with very little struggling finishing the amputation.

I knew an Indian once who had a bear trap which was not much larger in spread than a No. 4 trap. An ordinary man by placing a foot on each spring could set it, and yet that trap was his most reliable one. He had others too, but he took his "Davy" on that. It acted like that celebrated motto, "What we have, we hold."

This trap was made from his own directions, and he had the jaws at their inner edge three-quarters of an inch thick and bevelled off to a quarter of an inch at the outer sides. As he aptly put it — "I want the trap to hold the bear until I go there and shoot it, not to chop off its foot."

Another point about a bear trap that I consider could be remedied with advantage to the trapper, is to have the ordinary chains lengthened by a few links. It is not always possible to place the drag stick close up to the open trap, but where the chain is longer no difficulty would be found. A few more links would add very little to the weight or cost.



TRAPPED MAKING BEAR SET.

To a lone trapper setting bear traps miles away from any human beings, it's a tricky and dangerous job. I consider a man so situated should, as a precaution, carry one of those patent clamps for depressing the springs, in his pocket. I am aware some do not use them, as they consider them too slow, preferring a couple of short levers jammed under a root and pressed down with the knees while the hands open the jaws and place the trigger. Others use a piece of stout cord to tie down one spring, while with their weight on the other the jaws fall apart.

But accidents will happen to the most careful persons; by some inadvertance he might get caught by the hand or thoughtlessly step into it, and if he did not perish would have considerable difficulty in getting out, while with a cool head and a clamp within reach he could promptly free himself. I knew one man who lost his life in a bear trap and another who had almost succumbed to his suffering when found and released. There are three things with a trapper's life that I was always extremely polite and careful with—a bark canoe, a bear trap, and a gun. I handled these for forty years but never fooled with them.

Had the Indian mentioned used the celebrated Newhouse traps, we feel sure that he would have found no cause to complain. While

to some trappers the springs may sometimes appear to be too stiff, yet the face of the jaws are wide and as the manufacturers are always in correspondence with bear and other trappers, there is no question but that they know and are now manufacturing what meets the views of the majority of trappers.

We believe that of some sizes they are making the face of the jaws even wider than formerly.

The Newhouse bear traps are furnished with bear chain, clevis and bolt, illustrated and described under Newhouse Traps, but briefly described here. This chain is five feet long and with clevis can be fastened around any log which the trapper will want to use.

One thing must be born in mind, viz: That when traps are set, they are covered, and should severe weather follow, freezing this covering, it requires a stiff spring to throw the jaws together quickly. Our belief is that more large animals escape from traps too weak than from the too strong ones. Yet there are times, no doubt, when had the spring been weaker and the face of the jaws wider, the results would have been fully as satisfactory.

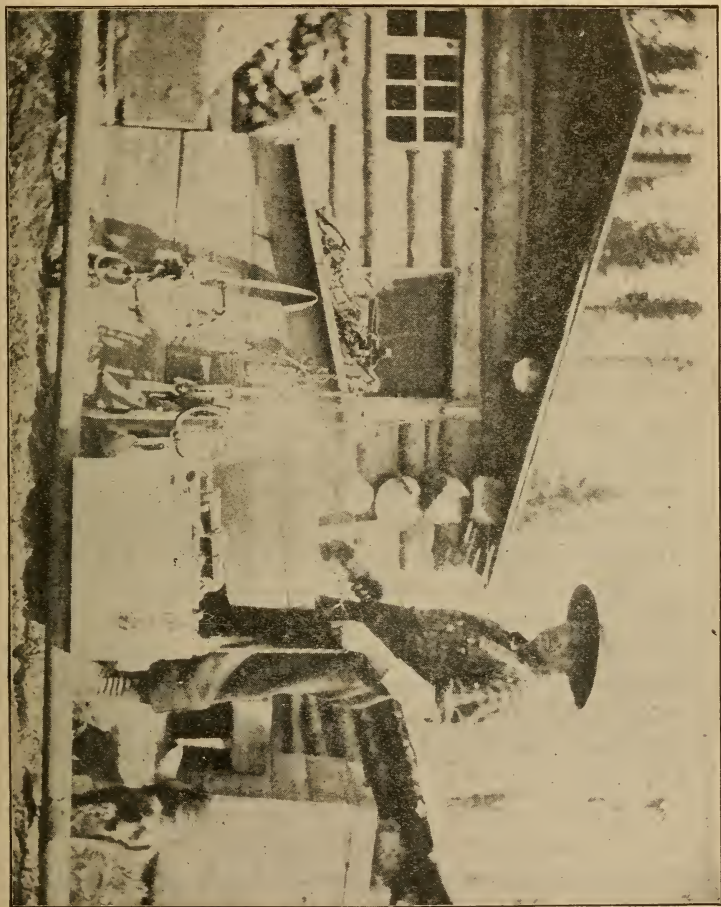
CHAPTER XIII.

CARING FOR TRAPS.



NOTE that traps should be examined carefully just before being set to see if they will work properly. New traps should be thoroughly greased with almost any kind of grease that has no salt in it. Salt will rust traps. It is to guard against rust as much as anything else that you should grease your traps, for in that condition they are not so apt to give good service.

If you have a supply of traps that are badly rusted, kerosene poured over them and let stand for a few hours will tend to remove the rust. After you have cleaned all of the rust off possible, grease the trap carefully and thoroughly with some good fresh grease, such as lard or the fat of some animal. Good oil will answer if you can not get the animal fat. Trappers can usually get an animal or two and fry the fat from it. This is an easy task and with this grease your traps. If this is done with old traps at the close of the season it will help preserve



them. It is a good idea, also just before trapping begins.

With new traps it is much more important that they be greased before setting as they will badly rust if not thus treated; old traps that have been greased a number of times can be neglected rather than the new ones. If possible it is best to attend to this several days before the traps are set, so that a part of the grease will be dried in, or evaporated so that in setting there will not be so much to get on your hands, clothes, etc.

In this connection it will not be amiss to say that traps should be carefully gone over before they are set, to see that every part is in working order. There may be broken links in the chain, or other defects. The swivel may be rusty and will not turn and the first animal caught is apt to break the chain. Many times have trappers gone to their traps only to find a part of the chain remaining as some animal had broken it and escaped. All traps should be very carefully gone over and mended, otherwise you may not only lose the trap but a valuable pelt as well.

What is best to apply to prevent their rusting? writes a number of trappers.

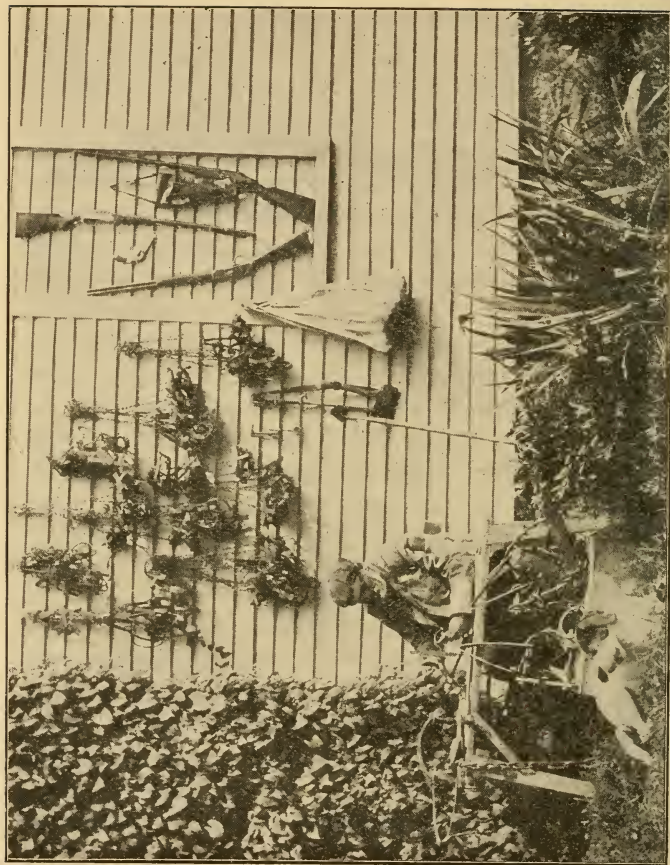
Almost any oil will answer, but perhaps animal fat is best and can be obtained by trappers

easily. Many trappers prefer to have their traps somewhat rusty, or at least want the newness worn off. It is not a bad idea to smear traps in the blood of rabbits or birds.

To clean your traps, boil them in ashes and water, rinse clean in hot water, then dip in hot water with melted beeswax floating. Raise them slowly out of this so as to coat every part. Hang up to drain and dry and your traps are ready.

In what condition are your traps for beginning a vigorous campaign; have you boiled them in soft maple bark or the husks of walnuts, to stain and eliminate the coating of rust, so that they will work well and be free of the animal scent from last season? All second hand traps should have this attention before trapping is begun. New traps will not take the stain until they have been used and rusted.

If it is hard for you to get soft maple bark or black walnut husks, you can get a pound of logwood chips at the drug store which will be sufficient for a five-gallon kettle of water. After a good dye is made put in what traps the liquid will cover and boil 15 or 20 minutes for each lot. If the water gets low put on a pailful or so as it boils away. If you only have a few traps use less coloring material and less water. Logwood makes a jet black.



PUTTING THE TRAPS IN ORDER.

When the fall trapping is over, the traps will be somewhat rusty again. Not many will go to the trouble to color them again in the same season, but now that the weather is cold and the rusting process is slow and you can renovate them and lubricate in the following manner: Smear all the rusty and working parts with fresh lard; also, the chain and swivel, and then with a wire hook or iron rod hold the trap over a small fire until the grease is melted and smokes. The heat will not hurt the trap so long as you do not heat the spring too hot. When the trap is cool enough to handle, rub it well with old paper to remove loose grease and you will have a trap that will not play you false. A good greasing like this will last all winter.

This article will not appeal to the many, but to the few trappers who are so situated that their mode of trapping prevents them in bringing home their traps when the season is over. A man who has a long line of traps set out is often at loss as to their disposal for the summer months. To pack out on one's back a weight of iron at a season when walking in the bush is at its worst, especially if the trapper is to return and set up the same line the next season, is a useless labor and a heart and back breaking job.

To avoid this the best way is to "cache" them



TRAPS AND TRAPPER.

in bunches where they are to be used again. This I know is a risky plan where John Sneakum prowls the bush, yet it can be done in safety if one takes proper precaution to rub out his trail. The "caching" of them is not the only question to be considered but also to leave them hidden in such a way that when next required they may be at once serviceable for immediate use.

My first venture at leaving them in the bush says a Northern trapper was in this way. I began at the furthest end of my line and gathered them till I had twenty. These I tied securely together with a piece of twisted bale wire through the rings. I then stepped off the main line to a clump of evergreens and bending a sapling down bow fashion, secured the bunch to the top and let the tree fly back to its place.

Regaining the main line I took a memorandum in my note book as to the cache something like the following: Cache No. 1 — "Bunch of twenty No. 1 traps, left opposite rotten stump on left hand side of road in thicket of evergreens, about thirty paces away," and so on with each deposit always mentioning some landmark as a guide to my finding them the next autumn.

Well, this mode was not a success. It was alright as far as the safety of the traps were concerned, but I found them in a frightful state

of rust from the action of the rain and atmosphere, and it took an hour of my time at each "cache" to rub them into a semblance of cleanliness. Moreover, there was a remote possibility of a bush fire running over that territory, which, while it might not consume the traps, the action of the flames would have drawn the the temper from the springs to a degree that would have made them useless.

The accidental leaving of an otter trap set all summer led me to "caching" my traps under water, that is those that I could conveniently carry to a lake or river. This otter trap when I came to it the following fall was covered with a light fluffy rust the color of yellow ochre. It stained my hands like paint, but was readily washed off. I held the chain in my hand and by sousing the trap up and down several times in the water, was surprised to see the metal come as clear as when first the trap left the shop.

I therefore, ever afterwards hid those traps that were near a lake or river in the water. There were traps, however, which were too far from water to be easily transported and as the tree tops were voted bad, I set to considering other modes of storing them. The atmosphere being too corroding I decided to bury them underground. The result was that the next autumn I found those that were in clay or heavy

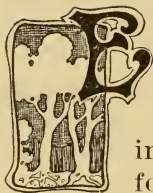
soil came out rusty, while those in sandy soil were very little acted upon, but the best conditioned were those hidden under rotten leaves or vegetable matter, so ever afterwards I kept my traps either in the water or hidden under the last conditions.

When leaving a bunch in the water I simply tied the bunch together, went a little to one side of the direct canoe route and dropped them overboard in about three or four feet of water, being careful to have some noticeable object ashore in direct line.

When next required I merely lashed a large cod hook to a short pole, fished them up, took them aboard my canoe and washed the bunch clean at a portage. In any case I do not think it is adding to the luck of a trap to have them greased and hung up in or about the house. The smell imparted to them is worse than the odor of clean iron. If I found a trap slow in snapping I usually rubbed a little odorless polish into the joints of the jaws and carried a rabbit's foot to use as a brush.

CHAPTER XIV.

MARKING TRAPS.



VERY trapper, like all other classes, have many things to contend with. One of the worst, perhaps, is the trap stealer, who having once found one of your traps will follow up your line and take them all.

If he can not find them by your tracks, he is apt to hide close by and wait until you go the round, then follow up and take your entire outfit of traps. To be sure that they are your property you should mark each and every trap before the trapping season or just as soon as they are bought, at any rate before they are set.

There are several ways to mark traps. One of the easiest and best ways is with a file. Select your mark or marks and file on each trap. Several notches filed on the under side of the trap will not injure the trap and will be a good means of identifying your property, should you ever happen upon them again. Place all the notches in the same position and at the same place on each trap and you have a good mark. The notches may be filed almost any place, excepting on the spring, and they should be filed on

MARKED AND READY TO SET.



two or three different parts of the trap. Should the person who stole the traps attempt to file out the notches, you can tell from the places filed if they are your traps, as all have been marked exactly alike.

The trap stealer, if he knows that they are marked with the owner's private mark, is not so apt to take them, for he knows that the owner, should he find them in his possession, can easily prove property. Whereas if there was no mark on the trap, the thief could not be convicted unless seen taking them. The thief also knows that if he is discovered, his trapping grounds will be watched. So having all traps marked in some way it lessens the chances of their being stolen as well as helps to identify them after they are taken. By all means mark all your traps — you may happen on some of them unexpectedly that have been missing for years. After you have marked a trap never trade or sell it, as you would then not be able, should you happen upon traps bearing your mark, to tell whether they had been sold or stolen.

Many trappers who lose traps by "Sneakum" each year do not have them marked. Often your traps are stolen by some one in your own vicinity as they know they can set them.

How about this if your traps are stamped with your own initials? The thief will know

that you can identify your property, and will not be so apt to steal as he will be afraid to set them.

When you mark your traps, never sell them, so that you know every trap bearing your initial is your property, making no difference where found.

CHAPTER XV.

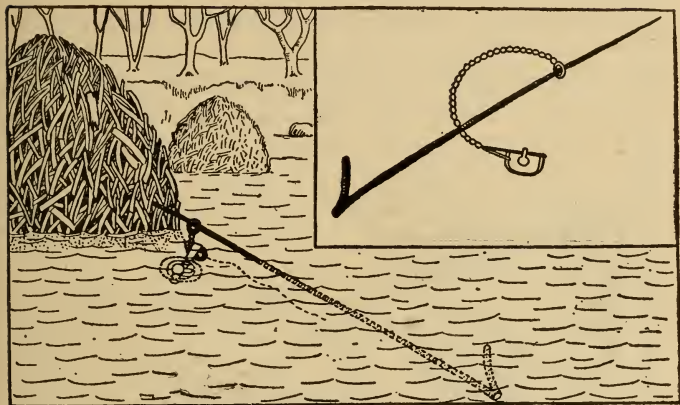
HOW TO FASTEN.



BEFORE a trapper has much experience he loses much of his game, after it has been caught, by not having his traps properly fastened. Having his traps so securely staked that anything caught can get a dead pull is usually the way the trapper with little experience fails.

How many of you are still driving stakes into the ground and otherwise fastening your traps so that when an animal is caught, it pulls on the chain? In trapping for muskrat, the stake may be used, but for any other animal, never. Even in the case of the muskrat the sliding pole is much better. This device is made as follows: Cut a pole or bush, say six or eight feet long, trimming off the branches so that the ring will readily slide nearly the length of the pole. On the end leave a few branches or short twigs so the ring will not slide off. The other end can be stuck into the bank or tied with the small end extending out into deep water. When a rat is caught, it makes for deep water and is drowned. If you use stakes to fasten your traps for muskrat, set them out into the water as far

as possible so that your game cannot get to the land and will soon drown.

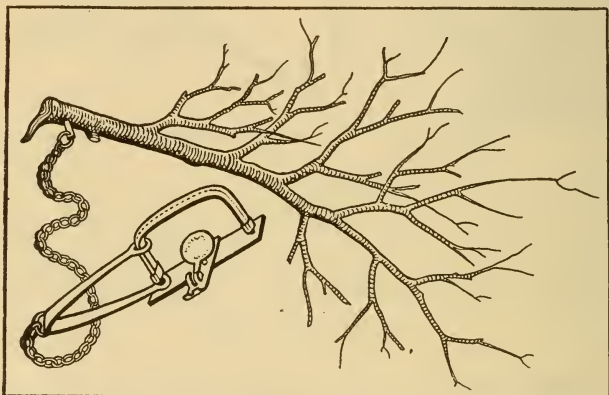


THE SLIDING POLE.

The proper way to secure your trap, when trapping for other animals than muskrat, is to drive the staple into a small bush as shown in illustration, or the chain can be looped around the bush near the end, with a branch or two left on to keep the chain from slipping off. The size of the bush can be determined from the sized animals you are trapping. If there are no bushes convenient, a piece of fence rail or chunk will answer, altho these will not give so readily as the bush, which will move easily with each and

every lunge of the animal caught so that its chances of getting out of the trap are lessened.

When your trap is thus fastened, the game will often get several feet or perhaps rods away from the den, but it is an easy matter to find the trap and game. If in an open field, a glance



A STAPLE FASTENING.

around will usually find the bush and game, while if in the woods, a trail will be left that can easily be followed.

The important fact that traps thus fastened give with each and every pull and struggle of the animal should not be overlooked; in fact, if the trap has not a firm hold, the bush gives so easily that there is no chance for the animal to

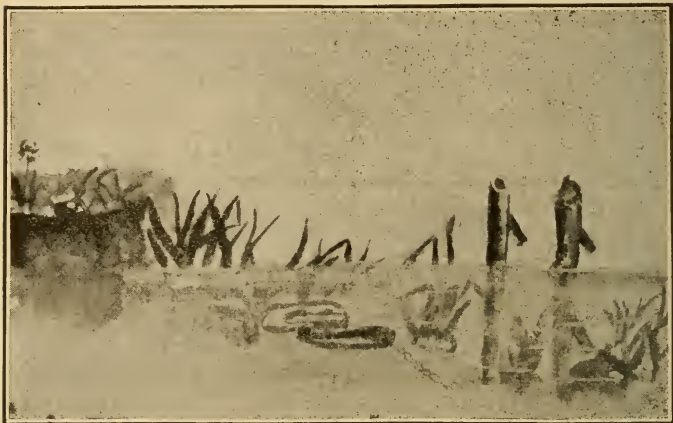
get a dead pull — that is, a solid one. See that all traps are fastened as above described and one of the principal causes of failure will have been remedied to a great extent and your game will not get away after once being caught.

In case a trapper cannot visit his traps very often, or he is annoyed by the presence of those animals that are liable to destroy his catch, the use of the spring pole for dry land trapping will be found very efficient in preventing the loss of game.

This contrivance is designed to lift the trapped animal high in the air and thus both hamper it in its efforts to escape and prevent other animals from devouring it. It is made as follows: If possible, select a standing sapling for the purpose. If this cannot be done, then cut a pole from some elastic wood, trim and drive it firmly in the ground, then fasten the trap chain to the upper end. Now bend down and catch the small end under a notched peg or root in such a way that the least struggle of an animal in the trap will release the pole and lift him high in the air. Of course the trapper will proportion the strength of his pole to the size of his intended victim.

All trappers have experienced a feeling of regret when visiting traps where game has been caught and escaped. The ones who properly fas-

ten traps seldom have their game escape, altho occasionally, when not securely caught and the trapper does not make his rounds often, an animal will get away.



SHALLOW WATER SET.

For a shallow water set we commend the one shown above. Place a second stake eight or ten inches from the fastening stake having short stubs on both and the animal will soon wind himself up around the two and drown.

CHAPTER XVI.

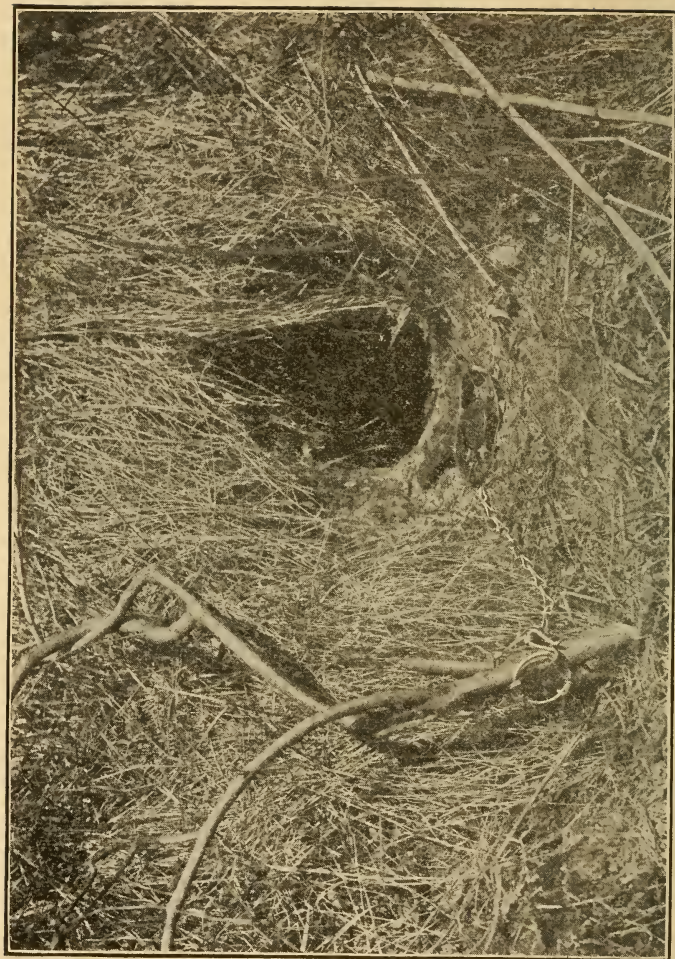
HOW TO SET.



HERE is a very difficult question, How to Set? yet by carefully noting the illustrations in this chapter we believe that many will be benefited, especially inexperienced trappers. Some trappers have continued to set their traps, after years of experience with springs sticking straight out, that is, so that the animal will step upon the spring first. This often warns them of the danger. Others set traps without a sign of covering. In each instance they may catch a few rabbits and perhaps a skunk or two, but they are not trappers and will not catch much game.

Having decided where you are going to set, if at a den, make an excavation the size of the trap and about an inch deep, place the trap in the position (just at the entrance of den) and so that an animal in going in or coming out will not step on the spring but on the pan of the trap.

The trap should be in such a position that the animal will approach if preferably from the end opposite the spring. If the whereabouts of the animal cannot be determined, then the next



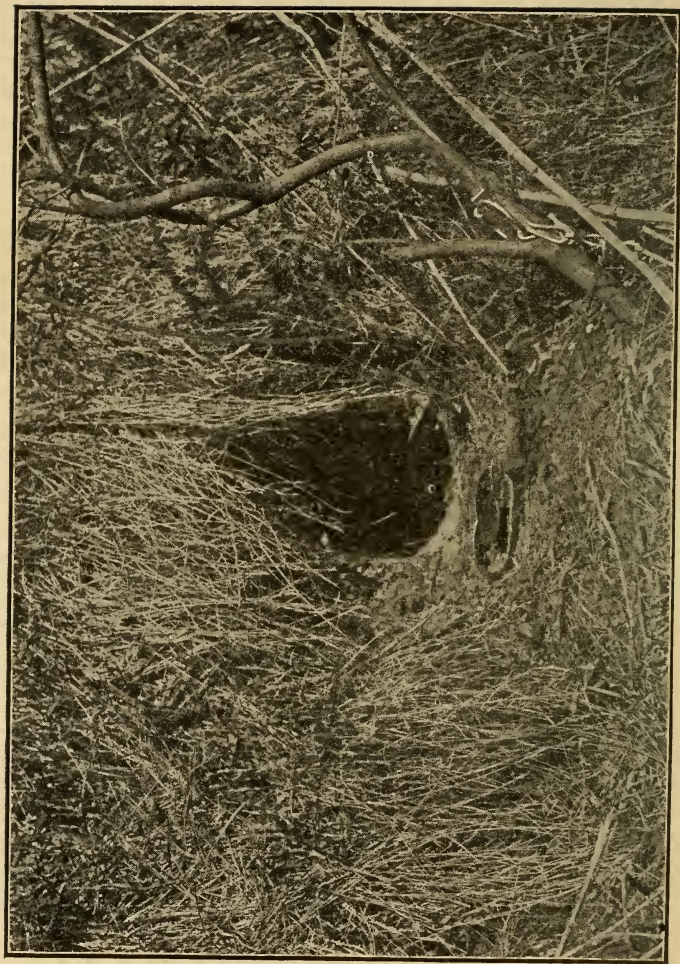
HOLE SET BEFORE COVERING.

best way for him to approach is from the spring end of the jaws, the spring always being thrown around towards the cross piece, out of the way.

If setting in a path in a run beside a log or a similar situation, set the jaws endways, not across the path and bring the pan a little to one side of the center, as near as you can judge where the animal will place his foot as he steps over the stick, stone or other object you have prepared for the purpose.

Many trappers place traps well back in the den, but our experience has taught us not to do this. A trapper who has followed the tracks of an animal, in the snow, has undoubtedly noticed that he went to scores of dens but turned away after going to the mouth of most of them. From this it will readily be seen that a trap set well back in the den would not be disturbed, while set as shown would perhaps have caught the animal.

After the trap is set, leaves, moss, grass, etc., should be carefully placed over the trap and chain, so that everything will appear as natural as possible. In covering traps, use whatever kind of material that was in mouth of den, that is, if the den was filled with leaves, cover the trap with leaves, etc. In this illustration the trap is purposely left uncovered so that trappers can see the position the trap should be in,



ANOTHER HOLE SET BEFORE COVERING.

If there are other entrances to the den they should all be closed, with the exception of the one where the trap is set. The only time that it is advisable to close all entrances is when you are sure that an animal is within. You are only sure of this when your dog has holed an animal, or you have tracked one in the snow into the den. There may be times, however, when you have your traps baited and the bait has been taken from the inside. In such cases you feel confident that the game is within. At such times it may be the best policy to close up the entrance and set your trap within, yet, if properly set, you are reasonably sure to make a catch when the animal ventures out and also have a chance to make a catch, should an animal happen along on the outside.

Traps should be set carefully and everything around the den left as natural as before setting. Dig a hole for your trap and carefully cover trap and chain with dirt, leaves or grass. Be careful that nothing gets under treddle of trap. After once setting traps, go only near enough to see that they are not sprung or containing game.

When setting trap in wet earth, place paper, cat tail, dry leaves, grass or some substance under trap so that during freezing weather the earth will not freeze to spring and jaws, thus



HOLE SET AFTER COVERING.

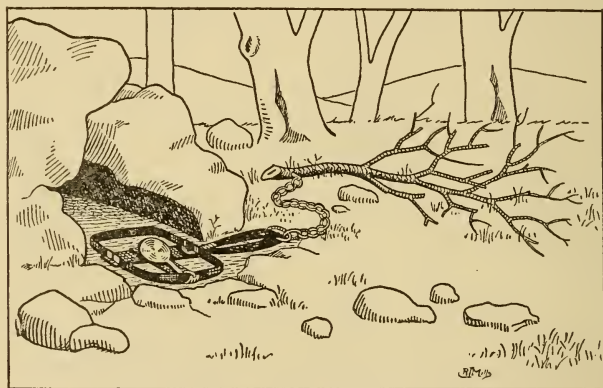
preventing its springing when an animal steps on the treadle. A little wool or cotton placed under treadle often keeps the dirt from getting under. It pays to set traps well—in fact too much pains cannot be taken.

I often read of the disappointments of a trapper when visiting his line of marten traps to find ermine, squirrels, blue-jays and even mice caught in place of the animal he intended to catch.

Now this is very vexatious, as the marten has departed for a district quite distant and is thus lost forever to him. An Indian or a regular trapper that knows his business always puts a spring twig under the pallet of his trap of sufficient strength to bear up the weight of these small fry and yet not too strong to prevent the larger animals from setting it off. In trapping for beaver and otter in open water we always use the spring to prevent mink and musquash from getting caught. Of course these are furbearers and proportionately valuable, yet there are times one does not wish to have them in the trap.

Even in setting bear traps a spring under the pallet is used to prevent foxes, lynx, fishers and marten from springing it. This is doubly necessary in setting bear traps for the reason that when one has bear traps set the foregoing

animals are unprime and consequently of next to no value. The spring for a No. 1 or a No. 1½ trap is made from a lower small branch of a balsam or tamarack tree. Why I say lower branches is because it is not so full of gum and suppleness as the top branches, while not actually dry, it is sufficiently so to impart a spring effect.



WRONG POSITION SET.

It is broken off about four inches in length and freed of needles. One end is introduced into the eye of the spring and the other end is deflected over and under the trap pan. By moving it out towards the outer part of the pan a greater strength and resistance can be obtained — lessening by pushing it the contrary way. For

beaver or otter traps we usually take the root of a small spruce or tamarack, and for a bear trap, instead of putting one end into the eye of the spring, we cut a shorter and stouter piece and bend it over like this and it is placed under the pan; the two ends are carefully flattened and squared off to prevent slipping.

After a little practice a man becomes quite an expert as to the proper tension required and it is very rarely a real trapper catches anything but what the trap was set for. This article is written for the benefit of beginners in the profession of trapping and not as a reflection on the knowledge of "Old Pard."

A splendid all around covering for traps wherever available (and I speak from experience) is hemlock fanlike tips, writes a New York state trapper. Use only the flat spreading ends with thin stems to blanket trap — a single layer is enough for all practical purposes. This is the general purpose covering, suitable for all kinds of weather. The strong natural scent of the hemlock seems to inspire confidence, overcoming animal fear and caution. It neutralizes and makes harmless all unnatural scents so obnoxious to wild animals and prevents under pan obstruction.

During the snowy weather, roof over the trap with brush, hemlock boughs, bark or such, with

openings on all sides. Build the roof high and wide enough to sufficiently protect the trap and covering from snow and sleet. A good trapper uses only good traps.

I will describe a few of my sets and hope they will be of value, writes a Rocky Mountain trapper. The first will be a mink set and, like the rest, is best prepared during the summer, then by the time trapping begins the newsness is all gone.

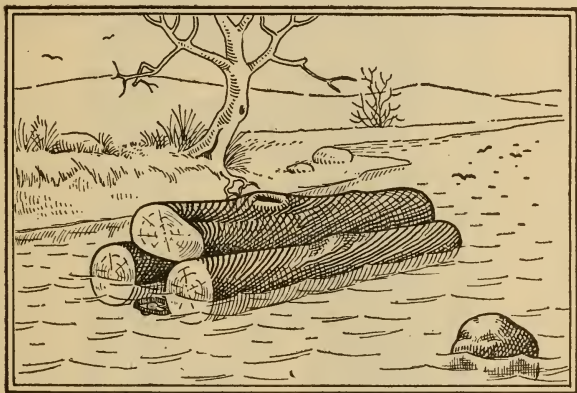
Set No. 1 is easily made by bending a few green willows in the shape of the letter U; stick them in a row six inches apart so the top of the bow will be four or five inches from the level. Cut some brush and pile on top and a stake or two driven in will keep it from going away in a freshet. This can be made in the water at a riffle or on the bank of the stream and you will be surprised to note the fine runway you have made.

Set No. 2 is on the same principle, but is made of logs 8 inches in diameter and 5 or 6 feet long. It can be cut on the dotted lines for convenience in placing bait. Set a No. $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 trap at each end. This is as good as a hollow log.

No. 3 is a marten shelf. Like cut, make by nailing a 2-inch stick three or three and a half feet long on each side of a tree and cover the projecting ends with bark—use a weight on

bark to keep it from blowing away; nail bait and place trap as shown. Use a spring pole of some description.

No. 4 is my favorite for bear, mountain lion and in fact all larger game. Choose two trees near together and place a pole from one to the other on which to hang the bait; 1 is bait the

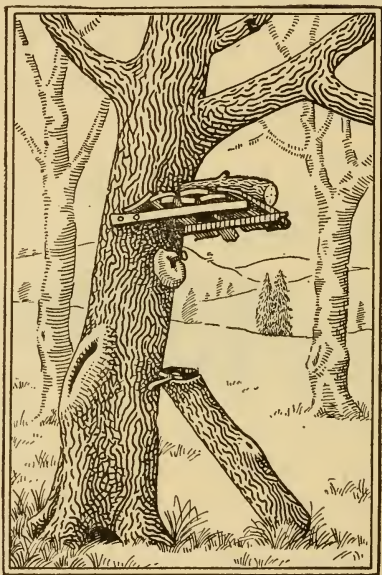


THE THREE LOG SET

height of which should be varied according to the game sought and 2 is the pole on which bait is hung; it can be nailed on or laid in forks.

In setting steel traps the beginner is generally very careless. He simply sets his trap on the bare ground, brushes a few leaves over it and stakes it fast, or staples it fast to a stump or

tree. As a rule he finds that the wind has blown the leaves off his trap, leaving it bare, or it has frozen fast to the ground, or if it has made a catch the game has escaped.

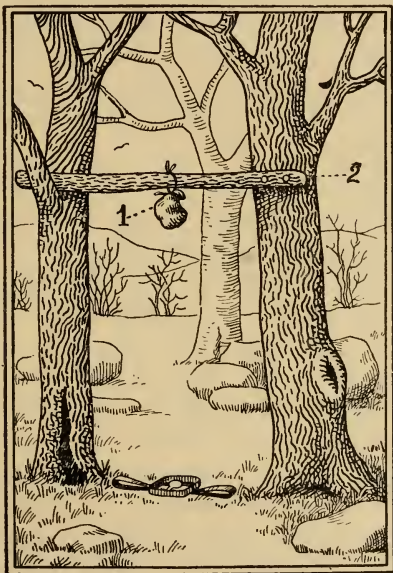


MARTEN SHELF SET.

In setting a steel trap, dig a hole an inch deep and the size and shape of the trap when set. Line this hole with dry leaves and set the trap in it, filling in between the jaws with dry

moss and covering with dry, light substance in keeping with the surroundings.

For trapping the shy animals the smell of iron should be destroyed, which may be done by



BIG GAME SET.

boiling the trap in cedar or hemlock tips. The trap should be covered with these tips so that trap and bed all smell alike. Do not make any tracks or have the bushes or grass trampled down

around the trap. Animals are more afraid of human signs than they are of human scent, at least I have found it so.

In setting the trap, be sure that the jaws lie down solid or the animal may tip the trap over by stepping on a jaw and you will think that you have a very cunning animal to deal with.

If the trap is set at a den or enclosure, turn the spring to one side so the animal will not step on the spring. I prefer the Blake pattern trap as the trap may be set with the spring pointing straight out from the enclosure and the animal steps between the jaws, not over them. Be sure, when setting at a den or covered enclosure that the opening over the trap is large enough to allow the animal to walk over the trap, for if they must crawl over it they are apt to snap the trap by pressing against it and all the trapper finds is a little bunch of fur. In setting traps on dry land do not stake it down as the game will often escape by pulling its foot out of the trap. It is much better to fasten the trap to a brush drag. I leave a good stout prong near the big end of the brush. Bend this prong down and slip the ring over it.

When making a water set I stake the trap into the water full length of the chain. If the water is deep use the sliding pole. If you are trapping muskrats, clean out all snags and brush

from around the trap or the rat may cut its skin in its struggles, which will lessen its value.

Here is a method of drowning the beaver and otter which was told me by an old trapper. Take a good stout wire about eight or ten feet long and fasten it to the end of the trap chain. A heavy stone is tied to the end of the trap chain. A heavy stone is tied to the chain of the trap and after



RING OR LOOP FASTENING.

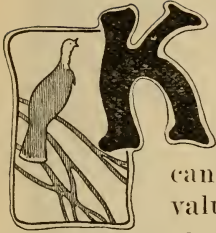
the trap is set the wire is stretched up or down stream and fastened to a stake driven in the bank under water. When the game is caught it plunges into the water and the weight of the stone and trap pulls it down to the bottom. The trap and game are secured by pulling up on the wire. I have never used this method, but think it would be all right.

If the trap is a "bolt" double spring, place the trap on the knee and press down spring and insert a nail — six or eight penny will do — under the jaw on the opposite side from the trigger or trip, being careful to insert far enough to hold and not slip out. Then set same as a single spring trap.

If the trap has the slip in jaws, drill a small hole in the bottom piece just below the holes which the jaws are in for a nail. One spring will hold the pan up. When set, press the other spring down and pull out the nail. One trial will convince anyone that this is an easy and quick way to set a double spring trap. I have never tried this on anything larger than No. 4 wolf trap. Hundreds of times have I said things that I would not say in Church or Sunday School while setting one of these traps in the snow. Trapper language will come forth when one pinches his fingers on a cold, frosty morning.

CHAPTER XVII.

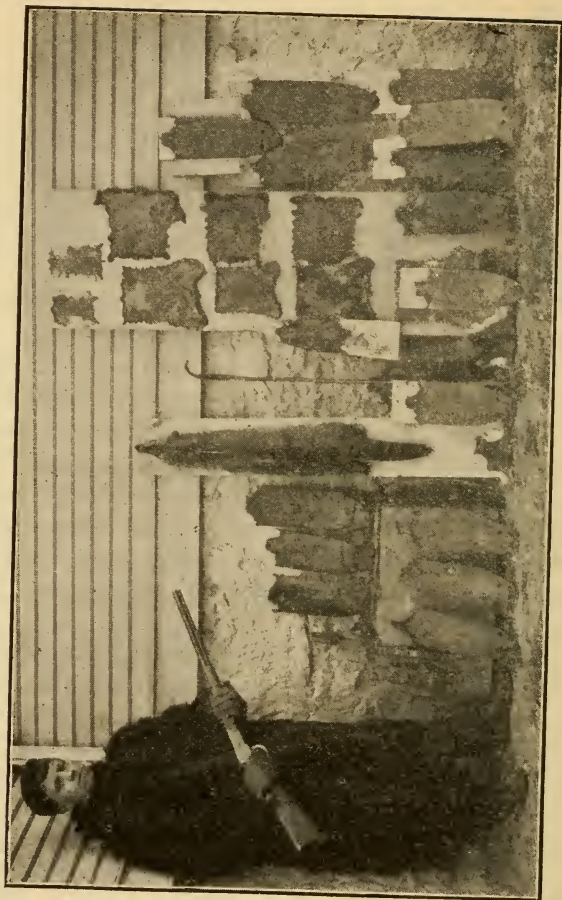
WHERE TO SET.



NOWING exactly where to set in all cases can not be told unless the trapping region is seen as well as each den, but in a general way some points can be given that will prove of value. Favorable places to set can be made to include a number

of situations. By this we mean that many take a good part of their catch each season at places away from the dens or homes of animals. Time and again have we seen traps set along creeks, in the woods, at drift piles and other places where there were no dens. Yet these trappers knew that fur-bearing animals frequented such places.

A trapper always should be on the outlook for signs of game. These include dung at dens, tracks at dens and along creeks and low wet places, feathers and bones at dens, etc. A close inspection of dens, will also show long hairs, if the same is used much by animals just before the fur begins to get good, as they then shed many of the long hairs. The experienced trapper knows from these just what kind of an animal



CAUGHT WITHIN THE LIMITS OF CHICAGO.

is using a certain den, and of course he knows what sized trap to use and how to proceed to set the same for the capture of the game.

An important thing for all trappers to learn is to distinguish dens used by fur-bearing animals from those of rabbits, etc. This can be done in several ways: Long hairs of skunk, opossum, coon, etc., are frequently found in the entrance to dens; tracks of these and other animals should be watched for; pieces of bones and feathers near dens is also a good indication that game is in the near vicinity—at least it may be known that it has been there quite recently.

There is as much in knowing the locality that game frequents as there is in how to set traps. The person who has made a study of the habits of fur-bearing animals knows pretty well the locality that each animal frequents. By this we mean that he knows that skunks, in the fall, are often found in open fields, in sink holes, etc., while later in the season they are found on higher land. This applies to the hilly sections in particular. Opossum and coon he knows are apt to be found in the dense woods, and mink along streams and swamps.

Trappers who have long lines of traps will find that it saves time and walking to have their traps bunched; that is, where they set one trap, should there be many dens, they should set two

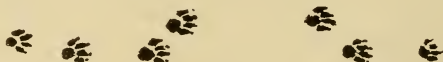
or three more. After doing this they can travel some distance before setting others, unless extra good dens are found, or other dens directly on their route. We have known three traps, within 100 feet of each other all to contain game, but this is an exception. More often, to be sure, they are all empty when the trapper makes his round. Yet it often pays to have traps bunched



FOX WOLF OR COYOTE TRAIL.

as an animal may go to several dens and turn away but enter another only a few feet distant. The trapper who has only a few traps will do best by scattering them and baiting each trap.

Along some bluff there may be a score or perhaps a hundred dens, and to set a trap at



FOX, WOLF OR COYOTE ON THE RUN.

each is out of the question, with the trapper who has an abundance of traps, as well as the one who has only a few. At such places it is best to set your traps where there are the most signs. Traps set here should be baited and the bait placed back in the den, beyond the trap.

It is not necessary to set traps in the dens to catch your game, altho that is considered one of the best places, for some animals have no certain dens, but hole up for the day, wherever daylight finds them. By this we mean they enter the first den they find. This being the case, trappers who know the locality, that is the feeding grounds of game, are most successful. Should you set your trap in the entrance to some den and no animal live there or pass that way there is no chance of being rewarded for the trouble.

As is well known, most fur-bearing animals are carnivorous, feeding on flesh, and the trapper who can locate the place, that is the hunting grounds of the game he is trapping, is usually successful. Along creeks in the mud and sand, look for mink and coon tracks. If they are found often, their dens are not far off. Both of these animals are much given to traveling along creeks and low swampy land and we have seen at such a place bait nailed to a tree, some two feet from the ground, and a trap nicely set just beneath it. The trap too, was set in the right place, for game was caught. It may be that in your trapping rounds you will come to a den where a rabbit or some bird has been devoured. Often you find that it has been eaten close to the entrance. Here is just the place to set your

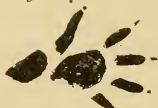
trap for if the animal is not now within it is apt to return

The various sets made by trappers may be divided into three classes, known as land, water and snow sets, altho each can be varied to suit different cases. The land set is used for all land animals and includes sets made at dens in trails, paths, etc.

front foot of musk-Rat.



hind foot of musk-Rat.



as they appear in the mud.

MUSKRAT TRACKS.

Snow sets are largely used for the shyer animals such as fox and wolf altho trappers use this set for any land animal when they think conditions right. Traps when set for foxes and wolves are usually set just before a snow fall, if the trapper is enough of a weather prophet to do this.

The water set is used mostly for otter, beaver and muskrat. Mink and raccoon are also caught in large numbers in water sets. Fox trappers in



MINK AND OPOSSUM TRACKS.

the Northeast catch many foxes in springs at water sets before hard freezing weather sets in.

I will give an excellent method of trapping animals on land writes an Ohio trapper. Fasten your bait to the body of a tree about a foot from

the ground and near a den or other place frequented by the animals you want to catch. Dig up the ground at the foot of the tree and cover the loose earth with leaves, also place your brush drag near the tree and after the animal begins to eat the bait, set your trap right under it and about six or eight inches from the tree and fastening the trap to the brush drag. Replace the leaves over the trap and cover the chain with leaves or dead grass. Do not disturb anything around the trap but leave the drag, etc., just as it was before the trap was set.

For mink fasten the bait on the side of a log, one end of which rests in the water and the other on the bank of the stream. The bait should be at least ten inches from the ground. Set your traps under the bait and staple the chain to the log. The first mink that comes along will pass under the log and stopping to investigate the bait will get his toes pinched. The best covering for this set is dead grass, leaves or snow. The best bait for mink is the head of a fowl or a piece of fish or muskrat.

About trapping mink in their den; first, if you find a den where a mink is living, says a trapper, don't by any means mash the brush or grass down around the den holes, but approach it very carefully with not less than two traps, all

WISCONSIN TRAPPER — KNOWS WHERE TO SET.



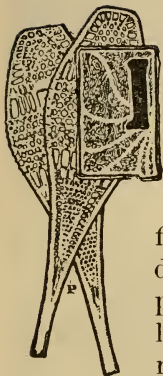
set and ready to place at the mouth or entrance of the den.

Now look sharply to see which hole the mink uses most. You can tell by the leaves and the grass which are worn to a sort of chaff in the mouth or entrance of the den. If you look carefully you will perhaps see three or five holes. You will always see two or three holes larger than any of the rest. The smaler holes are to escape by when any larger animal comes into the den.

If you look sharply you will notice a few inches from one of the holes another hole which he uses. Well, make a bed and place your trap deep enough to be covered lightly, just in front of this hole and so that your trap jaws will close lengthwise with the hole or the worn path. Never set your trap crosswise to a mink hole or run. Always drive your stake level, with the ground in which your trap is set if possible. Now go to the hole in front of the den and set your other trap or traps in the same manner, make just as little noise as possible while setting the traps and when leaving.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LOOKING AT TRAPS.



It is known to secure best results, traps should be looked at each day and the earlier in the morning the better. A trapper who has out from 50 to 150 traps scattered for a distance of ten, fifteen or twenty miles has a good day's work before him, but the trapper who has only a few should make his round early in the morning. It may be that an animal is not securely caught and an early visit to the trap

will still find your game fast, whereas had you waited till later in the day it would have escaped.

Some trappers are inclined to believe that certain animals gnaw their legs off when caught. Our belief, after years of experience, is that if an animal is caught by the leg after some hours the flesh below the jaws of the trap becomes numb and the animal begins to gnaw it. If the bone is broken by the force of the jaws closing, the chances are that the animal may after a day or so escape. If the bone is not broken there is



PROFITABLE DAY'S CATCH.

but little danger of the game getting away. The animal gnaws below the jaws, very seldom above.

One mistake that many trappers make is that on the first stormy or cold night of a prolonged cold spell, they neglect their traps until warm weather. Experienced trappers never do this;



SNOWSHOEING OVER THE TRAPPING LINE.

they know that the first night of a cold spell all animals are generally much more active than usual—they are hunting food and a good den. It seems that the fur-bearing animals are forewarned about the weather, or that instinct has endowed them with this power. At any rate they are on the alert the first night before a prolonged

cold spell, and on just such nights the largest catches are usually made. A night that starts in only fairly cold and later turns quite cold — the beginning of a severe spell — is the night that the professional likes to see, or at any rate, he is out to his traps at the first sign of day.

In the dead of winter it may be of little use to look at traps for most game. Altho some animals, such as the mink, fox and weasel, do not hole up on account of cold weather. Skunks have been known to remain in their dens for eight weeks in winter. Several cases are on record where these animals have been tracked to their dens, all entrances closed, traps set within and no catch made for eight weeks.

In the Northern sections these animals hole up in December and remain there until early in February, unless there is a very warm spell. In other sections, in the South, they continue active throughout the entire season. In the Middle and Central States this animal remains in its den during severe weather only. At other times skunks have been known to remain in their dens for a month, but in such cases the animal has perhaps gone in on a rabbit, killed it and is living off its carcass.

Where the trapper is after otter, beaver, and muskrat, and his sets are made with the sliding pole or with a wire fastened to end of chain lead-

ing to deep water so that the animal is drowned, the traps need not be looked at daily, for the game is dead and under water, in which condition the fur will not be injured for some days.

Mink and coon are also caught in water sets,



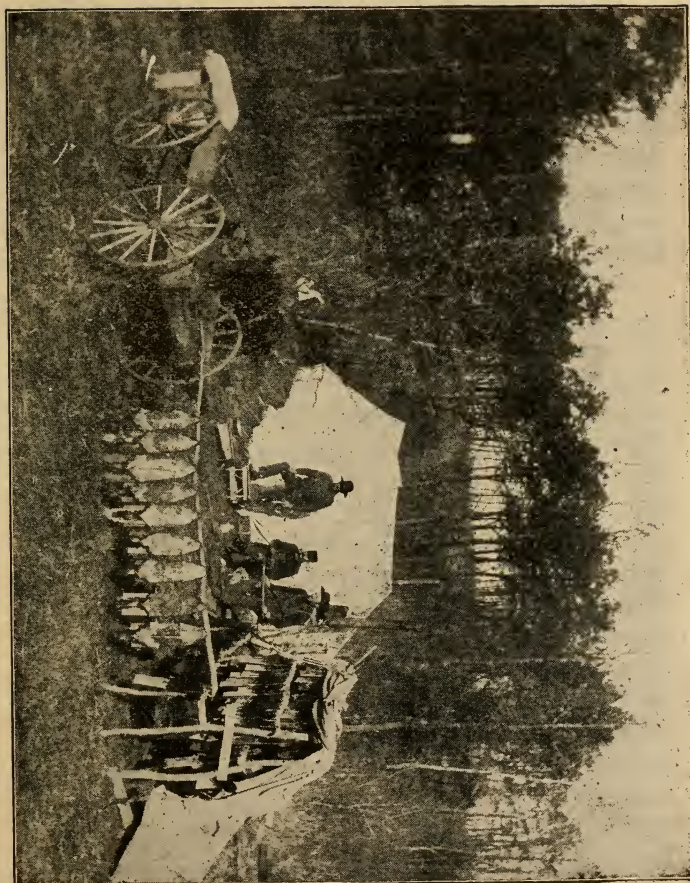
ONCE OVER THE LINE — WHITE WEASEL.

and should be drowned by using the same fastenings as for the water animals. It is a good idea to tie a weight to chain near the trap, so that when the animal is caught and gets into deep water, the additional weight helps to hold it down and so of course it drowns sooner.

Spring poles are used in many of the Northern States and Canada, so that when an animal is caught it is lifted several feet into the air and out of reach of other animals, but in other sections the spring pole is little used and trappers should get over their lines of traps as often as possible, for there is always more or less danger of the animal escaping or being destroyed by larger game.

The most successful trappers are those who visit their traps often. In addition to loosing little or no fur after once being caught, they keep their "sets" in good condition.

The experienced trapper knows that the first night before severe weather each winter, his traps are much more liable to contain game than on almost any other night. Why is this? Animal instinct tells the animal that winter weather is coming, and they travel much more just previous to cold snaps hunting food and good warm dens. At this time, too, they go into most any den to explore it. Some trappers neglect their traps the first cold night. This is a mistake, for the animal often travels the first night of a cold spell as well as the night previous. Of course they do not travel as much the first cold night as the night previous, but some animals not suited with the den found, stir around another night looking for better quarters.



CAUGHT JUST BEFORE A COLD SNAP.

This rule perhaps does not hold good for such animals as fox, mink, marten and other fur-bearers that keep traveling most nights during the winter, no matter how severe the weather, but with such animals as skunk, coon, opossum, muskrat, etc., it does. The first night of a cold spell early in the season and the first night of a warm spell during the winter, trappers should have their traps in good order.

Many trappers, as soon as the trapping season opens, set traps for all kinds of fur-bearing animals that are found on their grounds. This as a rule is a mistake. Skunk and muskrat should be taken first, from the fact that skunks den up with the first severe weather and muskrat are hid under the ice. So trap these animals in earnest at the first of the season.

On the other hand, mink and fox travel the coldest nights in midwinter as well as the warm ones; in fact, these two animals are most successfully trapped when some of the other fur-bearers are denned up. Coon, however, should also be trapped rather early, as they den up early in the season, although they come out on warm nights. By February 15th skunk are usually running again. This applies to central sections. Of course North and South, the conditions vary. In the extreme south the animals keep going all

winter, while in the far North some den up for many months.

Trappers must use their judgment what to trap first, depending somewhat upon the number of trappers in their section. The above is meant for the trapper who is stationed for a full season at the same place. Of course the trapper who is moving, often takes any and all animals he can if the fur is prime.

CHAPTER XIX.

MYSTERIOUSLY SPRUNG TRAPS.



N determining the length of time to have a trap set depends largely upon how many other traps you have in the vicinity and what success you are having with them. It may be that a trap will remain at a den for two weeks unsprung and during the next two weeks catch two or three animals. Other traps may be sprung occasionally and not contain game, but if the trapper has followed instructions as previously given there should be little difficulty in catching each and every animal that comes after the bait. The trap should have the animal the first time it attempts to steal the bait, but of course it cannot be expected to every time. A good trapper will get the animal, however, before it fools with the bait many times.

If, on visiting a trap, you find the bait gone, replace it and set the trap as before. The chances are that on the next visit of the animal it will get caught. Should, on the second visit, the bait be gone and the trap unsprung, the chances are that the animal is still in the den and is stealing the bait from within, without stepping over the trap. In this case, either place

the bait on the outside of trap or not use any bait for a few nights. The animal will most likely soon venture out, if you quit feeding it, and will get caught.

The ideas advanced by some that animals spring traps after turning them over, with their



BAIT STEALER — BIRD.

noses or paws, is all nonsense. It may be possible that they do step over the trap and knock it off with their body, thus not getting caught. Such cases are rare, however. You have no doubt visited your trap and found a few hairs in it. On such occasions it was probably knocked

off by the body of the animal. It may be possible that animals have turned traps over in their endeavors to get bait with their nose or paw, but you can rest assured that they did not know by so doing that it lessened the chance of getting caught. If you can induce an animal to come and get the bait there is no doubt but that you will catch your game sooner or later.

In regard to traps being sprung, it is possible they are set too easy, and go off of their own accord, after the trapper has left them. Again they may work too hard, not going off easy enough. All these things the trapper should guard against. If the trap has been properly set there will be no trouble from the source just named, and traps once set the trapper should keep away from, as far as possible when making his rounds, unless they are sprung, the bait gone or contain game.

Should traps be sprung morning after morning without catching the animal it is possible that if you move the trap, or better still leave the one as before and set another, you will be rewarded. Sometimes an animal will manage to get bait without getting caught. At other times it may get bait without knocking off the trap. At such times the bait is too near the trap most likely, the animal reaching it without stepping over the trap, or if the trap has not been prop-

erly set the animal may be going around the trap.

Just how long a trap should be left at one place if not bothered is hard to say as so many things bear upon the question; if the weather is cold and few animals moving they should be left much longer than if good trapping weather. If the den has been a good one other years, that is, if you have caught game there, then leave longer than if you never caught anything there. If other traps are making catches near, leave as long as you are trapping there unless you find a much better looking den near and have no trap with you, then take this one.

When traps are sprung and pulled back into the den as far as the chain will allow them to go, the chances are that the animal is still in the den. On the other hand, if the trap is dragged to the outside the game is liable to have gone away. In either case it will likely be around again in a few nights, as having once got a meal it will not be slow to make another visit. If the animal was caught and only escaped after prolonged struggles it may not return for some time and possibly not at all. Yet when a trap is set and fastened as directed, few animals when once caught escape. Here is where proper fastening comes into use; if the trap had a fairly good hold on the animal and the trap was staked



NORTHERN TRAPPER WITH PACK BASKET.

solid the game might have escaped but would be so badly injured and frightened that it might never return.



SOME NORTHERN FURS.

When fastened properly to a bush or light drag, the game rarely escapes even though the trap has only a toe hold, unless the trapper is days in making the rounds. Should an animal

escape when only slightly injured it is apt to soon return.

In many cases where game has escaped after once being caught it is not the fault of the trap but of the trapper. Should the bone in the animal's leg be broken and after days of endeavoring the animal frees itself there should be no blame attached to the trap, the fault is with the trapper — he should have visited the trap sooner.

Many trappers believe that animals become so sharp that they will turn traps over. This we hardly believe. At the same time trappers have set traps upside down and caught the animals. This, perhaps, is accounted for from the fact that the animal in reaching for bait would turn the trap. It is usually the case that animals will go about getting bait in a certain manner and the changing of location of trap may be the means of making a catch.

Some years ago when trapping mink, I visited a certain deadfall that was "down" each morning and the bait eaten. The trap was reset and rebaited each time for perhaps a week, even after making the pen smaller and the trap easier to go off, it continued to be down and bait gone. By this time I was anxious, and taking a No. 1 steel trap I carefully set it on the inside of the pen, covered it well and rebaited the dead-

fall. On my round the next morning neither the trap nor bait were disturbed.

The second morning the deadfall was down and in the steel trap was a small mink — the smallest I ever caught. This accounted for the animal being able to get inside the pen and eat the bait. It was so small that when the log fell its body was entirely inside the fall. I hardly think that small mink, which was less than a year old, knew that it would get caught unless it was inside the fall, but its size was such that it could easily get out of danger, and each time it ate the bait it was in the same position on the inside.

CHAPTER XX.

GOOD DENS.



OME trappers as soon as they have caught one animal remove their trap thinking that there is no longer any use to leave it at that den.

While this may sometime hold good in case of large game, such as bear, panther, etc., it does not with most animals; in fact, there are certain dens where trappers each season take from two to five or even more animals. In the case of the larger game even they seem to scent your bait and two bears and occasionally more have been caught at the same place within a few days.

The fact, as a rule, that you have caught one animal in a den, should not cause you to remove your trap. The more animals caught at the same den the better. There is a reason why certain dens are the favorite homes of animals. It may be because they are dry and warm, that there is a nice bed of leaves, etc. At any rate, trappers know that certain dens are valuable — that each season there are animals living there — it making no difference how many have been caught the previous winter. At such dens it will pay to leave your traps all the season, that is,



NEBRASKA TRAPPER'S ONE NIGHT CATCH.

if you have other traps that are catching game in the vicinity. Of course it would not pay to leave one trap set if you did not have others within a short distance. As a rule where there is one good den of this kind there are others in the vicinity, so that you do not want to remove from that certain section.

It often happens that two trappers trap during the season on the same ground, one in the fall and the other later in the season. The second one has often taken more game than the first in the same length of time. Both were considered good trappers and of equal experience. This only goes to show that you never know when all the game is caught; in fact, it never is, for if such was the case there would be nothing left to catch another season, yet when another season arrives the game is apparently about as numerous as ever.

This shows that good dens should be looked up by trappers, if in new trapping grounds to them, before the season opens. The best time to look for signs is in the fall, yet many a good den has been discovered by tracking animals in the snow to their burrow. These extra good dens are usually located on high grounds, at least not in swamps or very low land. It is true, however, that on low land and along sinks and damp places there is good trapping early in the

NIGHT'S CATCH BY COLORADO TRAPPER.



season, but as a rule animals hunt higher and drier sections before the extreme cold weather comes. This being true the best dens are most always found on high and dry ground. Another proof of this is the fact that when large numbers of skunk are dug out of a den it is nearly always on high and dry land.

That there are many excellent dens along rocky bluffs, sandy hill sides, and other like places, the experienced trapper knows. He also knows that along the low land in early fall is good trapping. Mink and coon are, of course, to be caught along streams at all times. It is not necessary to state even to the amateur if muskrat, beaver and otter are what the trapper is after, that along streams is the only place to make a success.

Days spent early in the season looking up dens where hairs, bones, feathers, dung, etc., are to be seen, are days well spent, for many times has a trapper set traps at dens where within a few hundred yards were many better ones, but not being acquainted with the locality, he overlooked these until a snow came. Then he tracked an animal which led him to the dens, otherwise he perhaps would not have discovered them at all. Keep your eye open at all times for good dens. That a large number of animals were caught at a certain den last winter is evi-

dence that that certain den is just the kind of a burrow they want.

It may be that you caught all the animals that lived there the winter before, but others have been raised since. These on their wanders for food have found the den and have found, like their relatives of the winter before, that it was just what they wished, hence they, too, have returned for the winter.

At any rate, a den that is good one season is worth more to the professional trapper than one that has never before showed signs. Or in other words, if he has only one trap left and discovers a new den apparently as good as the one where the winter before he made such good catches, you may rest assured that he will set his trap at the old den. It is possible that not a single animal will be caught this season at the den where such good catches were made last season, but this is an exception rather than the rule.

Old trappers will tell you that they caught so many animals at this den in a certain season, so many the next, etc. Perhaps more skunk have been caught at one den in a single season than any other animal. The catching of ten or twelve at a place is no uncommon occurrence in a season. There are a few cases on record where trappers have caught as high as fifteen, and one in-



BOTH TRAPPERS — FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

stance that we know of, where seventeen were caught at one den from November to March 10th. This was certainly a remarkable catch.

Old trappers will also tell you that signs are what you should look for at all times. These are not only found at dens, but by watching everywhere; signs found in the woods often cause the trapper to hunt for dens which are often close by. Good dens are not at all hard to tell by the experienced trapper, and if you are a young trapper and can induce some experienced trapper to let you make the rounds with him or pay him to spend a day or two with you, it will be to your advantage.

During the summer months when you are running around through the fields and woods fishing and hunting and having a good time, then is the time to start the foundation for the coming season's trapping. Always be on the lookout for signs and learn to read Nature's writings. Then when the trapping season opens, you will know exactly where to set your traps and you will be far ahead of the other fellow that has waited till the season opens before looking over the grounds.

I am glad to see an awakening of the trapper for the protection of fur-bearing animals during the summer months when the fur is unprime; also, the protection of the animal dens. In the

June number of H-T-T, writes an Iowa trapper, I called trappers' attention to Johnny Dig-em-out and his destructive method of trapping, and I think every trapper that has trapped in a thickly settled country will bear me out when I say he has lots to do with the disappearance of the fur-bearing animals. I will cite you to the buffalo for instance; years ago the plains were covered with them, but after the hide hunters had gotten in their work for a few years the buffalo was a thing of the past. So, brother, let us take heed before it is too late, or the time will soon come when trapping in the older settled parts of the country will be a very unprofitable business.

Ten years ago in this part of the country, skunk were very plentiful; it was a very poor farm indeed that did not contain at least one skunk den, but now they are about as scarce a fur-bearer as we have. The Dig-em-outs will ask, "Does it pay to trap skunk when you find a den?" I say "Yes." Eight or ten years ago I tracked a skunk into a den. I trapped three skunks in as many nights from that den, and since then I have probably taken twenty-five from the same place, and the den is in good condition yet, and each winter I know where to go to get skunk. Brother, did it pay to leave that den? Some say it is too slow work to trap out

a skunk den; I will tell you a quick way that I have tried with success. Build three or four pens near the den, put a bait in each pen and a trap at the entrance of each. I have caught as high as three in a night from one den, that way.

Now trappers, let us strive the coming season, to protect the homes of our fur-bearers, so we can enjoy the pleasures and profits of trapping in the years to come. Let us take the fellow that digs out the dens aside and give him a little good advice and show him where he is working against his own good. Many of them are nice fellows, but simply a little thoughtless about the future of these animals.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PROPER BAIT.



WHILE baiting traps is not necessary when trapping at dens, yet the trapper who baits his traps will catch more game than if the traps were not baited. To show where a baited trap has the advantage, we will suppose that an animal passes a den where a trap is set but not baited. It is just as a notion takes the animal—it may pay a visit to the den and go in, and again it may not. If a trap is baited the chances are that if the animal passes within a few feet, it will reach the bait.

Bait, whether bird, fish, chicken, beef offals or rabbit, should be fresh for most animals. When trapping at dens the bait should be stuck on a short stick, so as to keep it off the ground, and placed back in the den, beyond the trap some eighteen inches or two feet. Should the bait be gone morning after morning and the trap unsprung, your game is pretty sure to be still in the den and living off your bait. In this case it will be a good idea to change and place the bait on the outside. If the animal is getting the

PART OF CONNECTICUT TRAPPERS CATCH.



bait from within, you are pretty sure to make a catch within a few nights.

If trapping in the woods for coon or along streams, where they travel, a piece of bait nailed to a tree, some two feet from the ground, and a trap set directly under it is not a bad set. For mink, bait can be suspended from a branch, tied by a string, to within say two feet of the ground. To set a trap directly beneath the bait if properly done and near where these animals travel, is a good way to take them.

The methods used by some trappers of placing bait on the pan of the trap should never be employed. An animal in reaching for the bait will spring the trap with its nose, and unless the trap is a very large one, not get caught. The correct place to put bait is where an animal in reaching for it, will be apt to get one of its fore feet in the trap. The way to do this can be told by a little study before setting the trap. If the animal you are trapping is a small one the bait should not be placed so far beyond the trap as for a larger one.

Should you find the bait gone when visiting your traps, replace it at once and see that your trap is all right. In nine cases out of ten, the animal will be around again in a night or two for another meal. Persevere and you will get

your game sooner or later. Seeing that your traps are kept properly baited is an important item; also, keeping bait as fresh as possible. After the bait has been at a trap for a week if it has not been molested, it is best to replace with something fresh. Do not throw the old bait away, either hang it up, out of reach of animals or carry it away from the den. If you have plenty of fresh bait, it will pay to replace oftener than once a week.

If you have a large quantity of fresh bait and have more than you can use to advantage, on your traps, it can be made use of, by cutting into small pieces and testing a number of dens. By this we mean putting a small piece of bait at dens you think are good or show some sign of game, but at which you have no traps. In a few days, visit these dens again and at all where the bait is gone, rebait and set a trap. This is a very good method and has helped many a trapper to increase his catch.

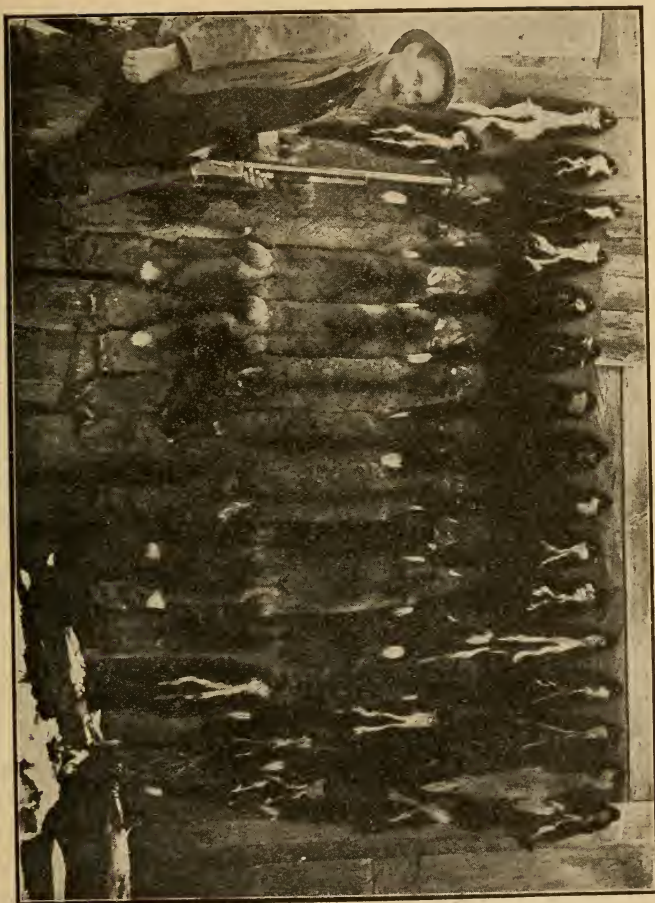
Most trappers do not take into consideration the keen scent of the animal they hope to victimize. To know how to set a trap properly is far from all in the line of success. To know your "critter" at every turn he may make and to entice him from his wonted way by means that challenges his cunning through his appe-

tite and yet overcome that suspicion of place and the circumstances of immediate surroundings is the real acme of trappers' art.

To place a bait anywhere above the trap is well enough for an animal of less cunning than a fox. But to challenge that cunning in a fox, better way is to bury the bait. The proper way to go about it is to make a trail by dragging through the brush or thicket a hare, squirrel or bird, and at the proper distances along this blind trail, strew the feathers of some bird, or make a bed for your bait, no trap being set, until you "take the sign" of one of your varmints.

Notice well the approaches to your intended "set." To be sure of your game, you must notice the "run" of more than one animal at a given place but the buried bait must be adhered to thruout your whole line. A bait, to my experience is more attractive when it is out of sight but so placed that your critter must work to reach it, in common phrase "root hog, or die." By this means the cunning of your victim is cast aside in its endeavor. Much depends on the patience of the trapper and his real handiwork. Where a set of this kind is made or contemplated, the presence of a few feathers are the prime requisites. Make it appear that a carnival of flesh has taken place and that the spared remnants lie buried just beneath. Drawing on your

EASTERN TRAPPER'S CATCH.



game in this belief for some time before making a set, is the proper caper.

If you can procure an ancient egg you have the tid bit for any varmint that may hit your track. You perhaps have heard much about the so-called "scents" or oils. They in a way are good to disguise the dreaded human odor, but may well be dispensed with and some are entirely out of place. Time will obliterate any and all human odor, providing you use your implements with tact and good judgment, your bait will keep and it will draw better a day or two after the first set. I never could teach any one much unless he went along the line with me. Trapping is a profession and not every one is by nature adapted for it, but some take to it as natural as a duck to water.

I get three or four dead chickens and start out. I place them along the bank and usually tie them to some small tree so that the head will about reach the ground. I never build a pen around them. I wait until something get to eating them, and then I take a trap and place it directly in front of where it has been eaten, and use more traps if necessary. I have caught as many as three skunks around one chicken,—have caught more that way than any way I have tried. Brother trappers try my plan and be convinced.

The entrails of muskrat, rabbit, chicken or duck will make far better bait than the animal or bird itself. In very cold weather I use the oil of wild duck which I save in the fall, but even in using the baits I speak of I invariably dig up the ground, unless it is a water set or a swamp set on some log.

In cold weather, or in fact during the entire trapping season, fur-bearing animals are searching for something to eat and consequently the trap that is baited is more liable to catch than one that is not. Fresh rabbit is an excellent bait for most animals.

CHAPTER XXII.

SCENT AND DECOYS.



IT is claimed by trappers that some methods are good while others are not. I have bought nearly all of the methods put on the market and find that all are good if properly used, says a well known trapper. Experience has taught me that you can catch any kind of an animal with decoy. Experience has also taught me that you can catch any kind of an animal without decoy. My belief is that there is one decoy that is of great value, especially in the running season, and it is that of the famous beaver castor. Few animals can pass it without investigating.

You can, however, use all the decoys put together, and if you do not set the trap properly you might as well set traps on top of a straw stack, back of some barn, to catch a fox, and you will get him just as quick. But if your trap is set somewhere near his haunts, on a knoll or under vines, at a hollow stump, tree or hole, and baited with a good piece of fresh bait, you will catch just as many if not more in the fall, than you will with the decoy.

In winter and spring I prefer decoy, although

I have caught a good many foxes without it. During winter and spring, the main thing is to know just how and where to set the trap. The



CAUGHT WHERE SCENT IS MUCH USED.

best way to find this out is to study the animal you wish to catch, then go after him. A fox is almost as easy to catch as a skunk if you con-

ceal your trap, chain and all, and leave things as you found them around the trap.

It is well to buy some good methods, for they will give you a good idea of your work and help you get a start. Should you try them and fail the first time, try again. Keep right at trying and after a while you will get to catching foxes. There is no man that can use another man's methods as well as the discovered himself; at least, not until he learns them and finds out how to use them. I care not how plainly the one selling his method explains it to others, it takes practice before the best catches can be made.

* * *

About scents, some may be good, but most of them are worthless. I sent to an old trapper for mink scent and it came in a plain tin can, I used it in every way I could and mink would turn and go around it, so I stopped using it and took to the old Scotch scent. Here is the recipe for making it:

Take two dozen minnows three inches long, put in two quart cans filled with water and seal. Let stand one month in warm place, then put on bait for mink or skunk. I use no scent for mink in water sets.

If a mink is hungry, writes an Iowa trapper, and finds bait that has been left for him, he will pay no attention to human scent, while if he is

not hungry, he will not take the bait, be it ever so fresh. A mink will sometimes make a trail in the fresh snow by passing several times over the same route and then never use that trail again. I have also known otter to do the same. I caught two mink last winter, in a ditch, setting my trap in the water. The first night I caught a medium-sized mink and the third night I caught a small one. I believe that I would have caught every mink that went up that ditch if it had not froze up, and snowed so much during the time, that I could not keep my traps properly set. If a person sets out a line of traps in this country while there is snow on the ground, he is simply going to a great deal of trouble to give them to some thief.

In trapping mink I watch for signs and when I locate a mink I consider it mine and it generally is. If you bait a trap where you may think it is a good place to catch a mink, it often happens that you may make a good many trips to your trap and not succeed. You may say to yourself that it is human scent that keeps them away, when perhaps there has not been a mink near your trap. My advice to young trappers is not to set your traps where a mink may go, but set it where you know he is going, and you will find it no trick to catch mink.

In writing about "Mistakes of Trappers," an

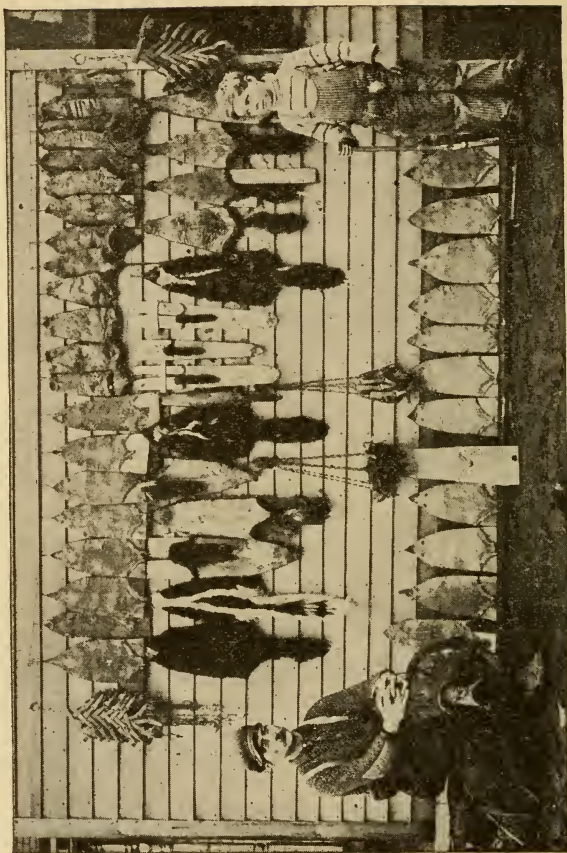


YOUNG TRAPPERS DISCUSSING SCENT.

Alleghany Mountain trapper of fifty years' experience says: The average trapper makes a mistake in listening to some one's ideas about scents for trapping an animal, instead of going to the forests, the fields and the streams and there learning its nature, its habits and ways, and its favorite food. He also makes a mistake by spending much time in looking after scents, rubber gloves to handle traps with, and wooden pinchers to handle bait with, instead of spending his time in learning the right way and the right place to set his trap. For one little slip and the game is gone, if the trap is not properly set.

We make mistakes in thinking that the fox is more sly in some states than in others. Not long ago I received a letter from a friend in Maine asking if I did not think that the fox was harder to trap in some states than others. Now the states in which I have trapped are rather limited, but I have trapped in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania, mostly Pennsylvania. I have also trapped in one or two other states and wherever I found the fox, I found the same sly animal and in order to trap it successfully it was necessary to comply with the natural conditions.

The worst mistake of all mistakes is made by the one who uses poison to kill foxes with. Let me tell you of an instance that came under my



TEACHING THE BOY ART OF TRAPPING.

observation four years ago in the southern part of this county. My road was over the divide between the waters of the Alleghany and Susquehanna. About five miles of the road lay over a mountain that was thickly wooded, with no settlers. While crossing this mountain I saw the carcasses of four foxes lying in the road. On making inquiries I learned that a man living in the neighborhood was making a practice each winter of driving over the roads in that section and putting out poisoned meat to kill foxes.

I chanced to meet this man not long ago and I said, "Charley, what luck did you have trapping last winter?" His reply was, "Not much, only two foxes. Old Shaw dogged them out of the country." (Referring to a man who hunted with dogs.) I said, "Charley, don't you think that poison business had something to do with it?" He replied, "Oh, h—l, there will be foxes after I am dead." This man calls himself a trapper and is quite an extensive fur buyer.

* * *

For fox decoy, get five or six musk glands from rats in the springtime; put enough trout or angle worms with them to make a pint, cork them tight and leave in the sun thru the summer, and add the essence from one skunk (squeeze out the essence, don't put in the bag). I have never seen a better decoy and I have used

many. You can use either one alone. I have caught many foxes with trout oil alone.

Remember the bait and scent is no good whatever as long as there remains a trace of human odor; the whole secret is, *Be Careful*.

The beaver castors or bark sacks and the oil stones are found near the vent in four sacks in both male and female. In taking them out, cut clear around them, and take all out together with as little meat as possible. The bark sacks contain a yellow substance. To get the contents, tie a string around the hole in the sacks and rub them between the hands until soft, then cut them open and squeeze the contents into a glass jar or bottle. To get the oil from the oil stone, cut the end off and squeeze it. Keep separate and mix as directed:

1st. Take the castor of one beaver, add 20 drops oil of cinnamon, 10 drops oil Anise, and "wine" of beaver to make the bait thick like mush.

2nd. Take the castor sacks of one beaver, add 7 drops of oil sassafras, 7 drops Anise, 10 drops oil from the oil stone.

3rd. Take the castor sacks of one beaver, add 10 drops of Jamaica rum, 5 drops oil of Anise, 5 drops oil cloves, 5 drops oil sassafras, 5 drops oil Rhodium.

4th. Take the castor sacks of one beaver, add

10 drops oil from the oil stones, and beaver's urine enough to make the bait like mush.

* * *

For beaver bait, get six castors off of beavers, one nutmeg, 12 cloves, 30 grains or cinnamon and mix up with a little whiskey to make in a paste or like mixed mustard. Put in a bottle and cork. In a few days it will get strong, then use as a bait on pan of trap.

You catch no foxes if there is any human scent around, says an Eastern trapper. I will tell you how I set a trap for fox in a brook of running water. Have your trap free from rust (beeswax is good to prevent rust on a trap); have on a pair of water-proof boots, put the bait on a rock about two feet from shore, and set trap on a rock three inches from shore. Cover trap about one inch with moss; have it rise above water, and place a rock for reynard to step on before he steps onto the trap rock. Put a few drops of scent on the bait, of the right kind, and be sure the trap is under water; handle bait and moss with sharp stick. Now I am sure you would catch no fox if you worked from the bank. Always walk in water when going to trap.

I will give a pointer on using decoys or scent for making trails, writes a Western trapper. Take a piece of sponge, run stout string thru it,

pour on your medicine and then place the sponge in the hollow of the sole of your rubber boot, bring the ends of the string up over the instep, cross them and tie on the back side of the boot and it will make a trail that a mink or coon will follow a mile or more.



TRAPPER'S HOME IN COLORADO.

The slyer animals, such as the fox and mink, soon learn to associate all fancy smells with danger, and then most scents act as warning instead of a lure, writes an Ohio trapper. For mink bait I think a fresh muskrat carcass is about the best

of anything, because muskrat is their common food and therefore they are not nearly as liable to be suspicious of it as of some strange scent, such as amber oil, anise oil, oil of cinnamon or oil of lavender, one or more of which is nearly always used in combination scents.

I generally take a hen carcass, smear it with the musk of a muskrat, and use it for a drag, as it will make a trail that a mink is pretty sure to follow to the trap which should be set in a hole near an old stump or log if such a hole can be found, and then covered with fine dry dirt, rotten wood or what is better than either, the feathers from the chicken carcass which has been used as a drag. I find it a better way to cut the bait into small pieces and use several pieces with each trap, but if only one piece is used it is best to stake it fast. If an animal only has to make one trip into the enclosure to get all the bait he will not be as apt to be taken as if he made several trips, which he is pretty sure to do if the bait is cut into small pieces and scattered around in the enclosure.

There seems to be quite a difference of opinion among trappers as to the "attractive" value of Scents and Decoys. Some praise them, while others consider them of little value.

In our years of experience as Editor of the H-T-T we have read thousands of trappers' let-

ters from all parts of America, which in addition to personal observation when on the trapping line, enables us to say that "Scents" and "Decoys," if rightly made, prepared and used are of value.

There is no question but that the sexual organs of the female secured "when in heat" and preserved in alcohol is a great lure for the males of that specie.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HUMAN SCENT AND SIGN.



HERE is a great deal said just now about the human scent theory, writes an Illinois trapper. Some claim that you can catch no animal if there is any human scent around, and they hardly take time to set their traps properly for fear of leaving scent. I always considered that the most important thing in setting traps was to cover them properly, and to disturb things as little as possible.

When your traps are set everything should be as natural as before. By that I mean that when you are trapping for the shrewdest game, such as fox, mink, otter, wolves, etc. For other animals such as skunk and muskrat, you need not use such caution, for they will blunder into a trap no matter how carelessly it is set. Still it is always best to cover your signs properly for you can never know what animal may come along. If your traps are carefully covered you are as liable to get a valuable pelt as a low priced one. Use care in setting; study well the

nature and habits of the game you are trapping, and you will be successful. Never begin trapping until the fur is prime for one prime skin is worth more than five or six poor ones.



A FEW DAYS' CATCH.

Among trappers there is a variety of opinion as to the different kind of baits to use, and also as to the different ways to avoid the smell of iron or steel traps. Some boil their traps in

willow bark; others dip their traps in melted tallow or beeswax.

I have had a fox get into my snowshoe tracks and follow a long ways because it was better traveling. Now that shows he was not afraid of human scent writes a Vermont trapper. Now about iron. How often does a fox go through a wire fence or go near an old sugar house where there are iron grates. That shows he is not afraid of scent of iron.

Once there was an old trapper here, and the young men wanted him to show them how to set a fox trap, and he told them he would, so he got them out to show them how, and this is what he told them. "Remove all suspicion and lay a great temptation." Well there it is. Now in order to remove all suspicion you must remove all things that are not natural. A man's tracks, and where he has been digging around with a spade or with his hands are not natural around a spring, are they? No. Well then, there is where the human scent question comes in. By instinct he is shown that man is his enemy, and when a man has pawed the bait over he uses his sense and knows that danger is there, for it is not natural.

Now I have a question at hand; in one place he is not afraid, and around the trap he is afraid. Now, how does he know when to be afraid and

when not? I think because when he sees a piece of bait in a new place it is not natural.

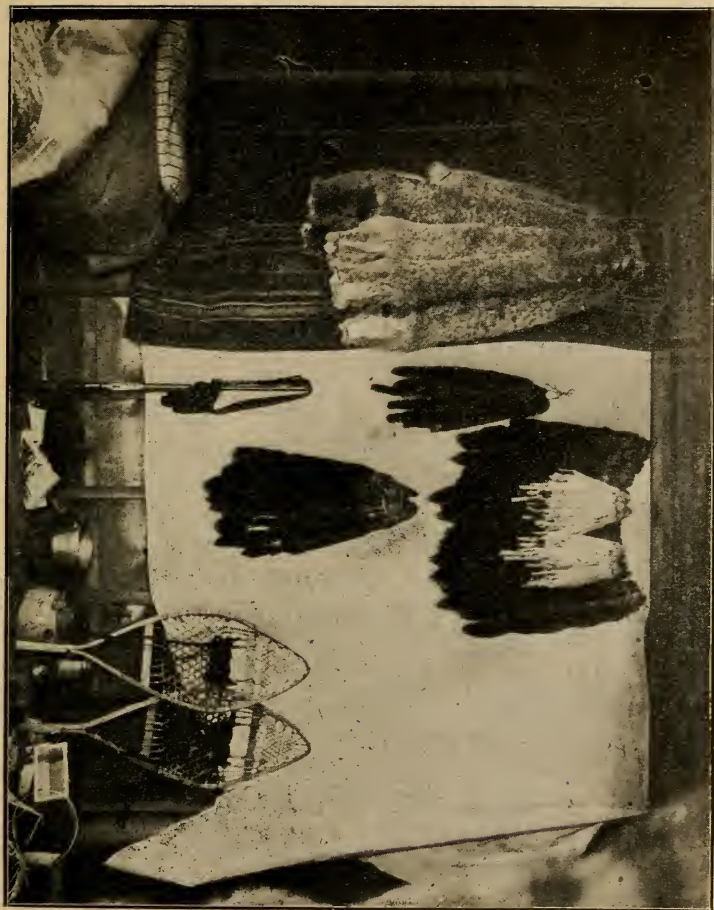
Once last winter I knew where there was a dead horse and I used to go by it, and one day my brother was with me, and of course he knew that I could get a fox there, so to please him I set a trap, and not another fox came near. Well, I smoked that trap, boiled it in hemlock and then smeared it in tallow, but the fox knew and never came within ten feet of it again, when they were coming every night before. When I went by there before I set the trap I left as much scent as after, and how could he tell when there was a foot of snow blown there by the wind after I set my trap?

Now they don't appear to be afraid of human scent or iron in some places and around a trap they are, so now why should they know where to be shy? Well, because it may be in an unnatural place, but what tells him it is in an unnatural place unless it is instinct or good sharp sense.

As for scent, I know that rotten eggs and onions are natural, although the matrix of the female fox in the running season is very good scent; also skunk or muskrat scent or decayed fish, as it gives out a strong smell.

One word to the novice fox trapper. You must make things look and smell natural around

THE INSIDE OF NORTHERN TRAPPERS CABIN.



the spring, and put before them the food which God has provided for them, and you will have success. Place the trap in the mud of the spring, and a sod on the pan of the trap. Use one that has not been handled by the hand of a human being.

I will give some facts on human scent and human signs in South Carolina. Now I have not trapped "ever since the Civil War"; I have never trapped "all kinds of fur bearers that inhabit the Rocky Mountains", but have trapped every fur-bearing animal of upper Carolina from muskrat to otter, writes an experienced trapper.

The mink and fox are the animals most trappers referred to, we have no foxes here to catch, therefore I am unable to say anything about Reynard. Mink in the Carolinas are not afraid of human scent any more than any other animals, but they are afraid of human signs in an unnatural place. It is a common thing to find mink tracks in my path where I visit my traps every day, they are made late in the afternoon. I have set my traps almost at night and have had a mink in them next morning. I used no scent or bait, and mink are very scarce here, too.

My favorite set is in cane brakes and runways, using no bait. When I first began to trap, mink were not so scarce as they are now, but there are a few left yet. Not many years ago

nearly every night I would have a muskrat's hide badly torn and sometimes the rat barberously murdered and half eaten up.

One writer says, take bait and scent and set a trap properly, then go a little farther on and set a trap without either bait or scent, and see which trap you catch a fox in first.

* * *

Now we notice that this writer brings in the bait every time. We are very much in favor of bait, and make bait one of our most essential points in trapping the fox. This writer says that those "no scent" men are the ones that say fox are afraid of human scent. For our part we do not claim anything of the kind; on the contrary, we claim that it is the signs that we make that the fox is shy of.

I see there are a great many talking about mink not being afraid of railroad irons and barb wire fences writes a Louisiana trapper. Well, I guess they are not, but some of them are afraid of human scent under certain conditions, while under some other conditions they are not.

Find a place where they are liable to come, and tramp and tread around just like an unexperienced trapper would do, taking an old rusty or new trap, handling with naked hands and set either concealed or naked, stick a chunk of meat up over it on a stick, and then remove sticks and

stones making a disturbance. This will make mink afraid of human scent in that place. A great many are afraid of a bait stuck up on a stick if there is humn scent around it, so I think it is a combination of these; namely, disturbances, human scent and the unnatural place to find food that scares them away. Yet they are not all that way by any means.

Now let some of these fellows who think animals are not afraid of human scent try to catch an otter that has been caught before and got away, and they will think differently. I caught one last winter, that had his front leg off within an inch of the shoulder. I also caught a coon that had both front legs off high up, and strange to say this coon was fat and in good condition. He wasn't a very large one, and his teeth were badly worn off. He must have looked funny walking around on his hind feet like a bear, that is the way he walked for I could tell by the tracks.

I see a great deal of discussion about mink being afraid of human scent writes a prairie trapper. I think there is a difference between mink concerning this: some mink are afraid and others are not.

Last winter I caught a mink in a trap but he got away before I got there, and that mink after getting loose, followed the tracks I had made the

morning before for about a quarter of a mile up the river before he turned in close to the bank. Now he didn't seem to be afraid of human scent.

Again I have walked up to a mink path, carefully set and covered my trap, and then carefully walked away in my old tracks, but never a mink would I get, nor would the mink even go along that path any more. I have even walked up to a path when I had no traps with me and then walked away, and altho the path had been used every day before, it was not used again for about nine or ten days.

I once set a trap at the bottom of a muskrat slide without covering, and although I had walked all around there and my trap was not covered, I got a mink.

I wish to say that mink are not afraid of human scent and in proof will tell a little experience I had with a mink while trapping for muskrat, writes a Massachusetts trapper.

One night I came to one of my traps which contained a muskrat that was partly eaten. I knew it was the work of a mink. Going on up the stream a short distance I had a mink, and I allowed that this mink would steal no more muskrats, but on investigating I discovered that this mink was coming down stream, while the one that had eaten the muskrat was going up, and after all I had not caught the thief.

Next night the same trap contained a muskrat partly eaten and I determined to catch the mink. I took the rat out of the trap and fixed for Mr. Mink by setting a second trap about three feet from the first one. I then started to look at other traps and was not gone more than an hour, and on returning to these traps I found that I had already caught the mink, and it was a big one and very dark. If this mink had been afraid of human scent he would not have returned.

In regard to human scent it does seem to me that after a man has trapped for a number of years he ought to know something about it, writes a trapper of the Great Lake region.

I do positively know that human scent will drive most animals away. I have been a great lover of taking the otter. Brother trappers, how many of you that have trapped the otter, but what have found out that he can tell that you have been there if you are not very careful, and he is not very much sharper than mink or fisher.

I do think that all animals can scent a human being. I have caught almost all kinds of furbearing animals this side of the Rockies, and I don't know it all yet, but I do know the nature of all the game I trapped, and that we must all know to make trapping pay.

In regard to scents, will say that undoubtedly

the most taking scent for male fur-bearing animals is that taken from the female during the mating season. Yet there are other things that will attract them sometimes.

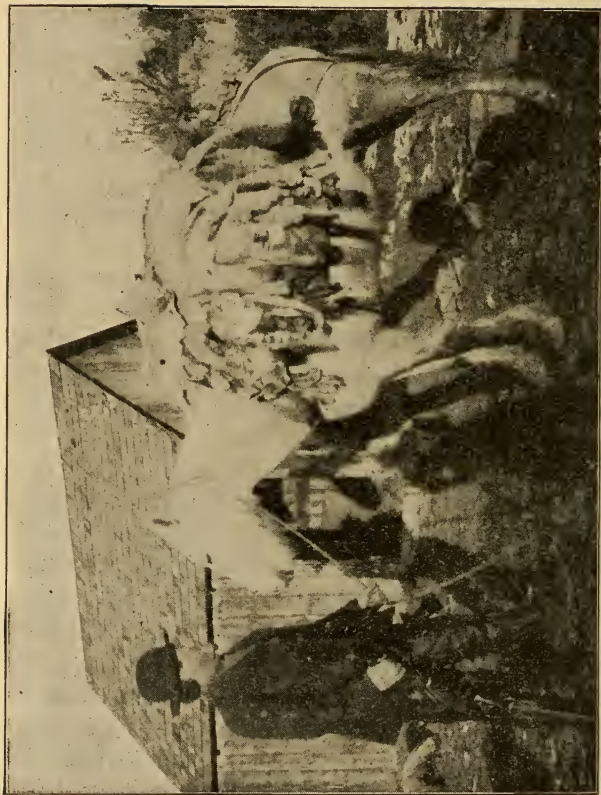
I believe there are times when the female mink can be trapped more easily with the blind set, in fact at least one-half the mink I ever caught were taken in that manner, without any muskrat meat.

I believe that a party may have and use all the scents, baits and methods in existence but without some knowledge of the animal sought, and also a little practicable common sense, and knowledge of setting traps he will meet with indifferent success.

Trappers are divided as to their views on "Human Scent and Sign". Some of the old and experienced ones think there is nothing to either for as they say they catch the shrewdest animals without any trouble. This is true but the trapper of years of experience knows how to set his traps without leaving "sign."

There is no question but that the shrewdest animals "look" with suspicion upon "sign" or anything out of the ordinary especially at their den or places where they often frequent.

The hunter knows that deer, bear, fox and other animals rely upon their sense of smell as one of their ways to evade them. Is it not as



COYOTE TRAPPING ON THE CATTLE RANCHES.

reasonable that they smell a trapper when on his rounds?

Of course after the trapper has made the set and gone, his scent will gradually leave and the "sign" is probably the cause of the animal keeping away, should it continue to do so.

That human scent is quite noticeable to animals is proven from the fact that bloodhounds can follow a man's trail or scent even tho it has been made hours before. Yet after a day or so the scent is lost and the best bloodhound cannot follow it.

Do not the same conditions apply to the scent left by the trapper when setting his traps for wolves, foxes, mink, otter, beaver and other keen scented and shrewd animals? It surely does, and after a few days, at the farthest, the "human scent" is all gone.

This being true, then it must be the "sign" that keeps the animal away. Again, it may be that the animal has had no occasion to return.

Where the trapper has just set traps for foxes or wolves and these animals visit them within a few hours they perhaps are aware that a person has been about as both "scent" and "sign" may be there.

To overcome "human scent" and "sign" the trapper must leave no "sign" and as for "human scent" it will leave in a short time. In visiting the traps do not go near unless disturbed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HINTS ON FALL TRAPPING.



BEFORE the readers of the H-T-T receive the November issue the death sentence will have been passed and executed upon many a luck-less fur-bearer whose hides will be "on the fence," for in many states trapping can be done at any time, more is the pity, writes a Michigan trapper and buyer. In Michigan no trapping is allowed until November 1st, which is plenty soon enough. Last season I saw many hundreds of skunk, coon and mink and also opossum skins that had been taken in October and were only trash. It was a worthless, wasteful slaughter. Muskrats are the only animals that may, with reason, be taken during the first half of October and yet it is better to wait until general collections are good.

I will first ask the amateur if he uses the precaution to stake his rat and mink traps at water sets with bushes instead of stakes. They do not attract the attention of hunters and other stragglers and especially boys as does the new whittled wood of a stake; sometimes it is necessary to go still farther than this and cut a short



EASTERN MINK — NOVEMBER CAUGHT.

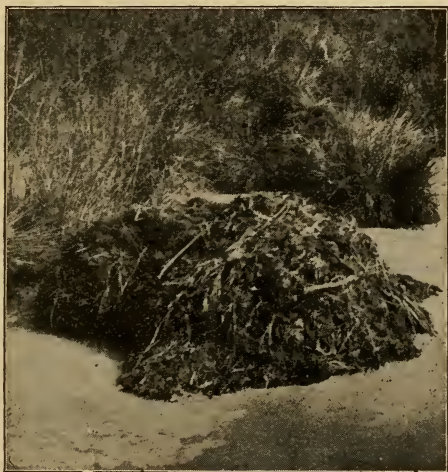
stake and shove it entirely out of sight under water or mud.

When you find where a rat is working slightly in many places along a bank and you do not know just where to place your trap, dig a little place in the bank at the water's edge and up above it and set your trap in the entrance under the water a half inch. This will attract the rat and you will most likely get him. It helps to pin down a rat's leg or other small portion of the carcass in the excavation just mentioned. Rats will not eat the meat, but it is sure to draw them into the trap; and then by baiting with rat flesh you will often get a mink.

After you have caught a rat at feeding signs or in any other inconspicuous place and you do not get more after two nights, it is well to move your trap to a new place. I generally trap three nights on one stretch of ground and then take up all except now and then one occupying the most favored positions; the remaining traps will catch the stragglers and the traps you remove and reset will be on guard to a purpose.

Be careful and do not dry your furs by the fire. I saw many lots of rats last fall and into the winter that would break like glass, the skins had been made so brittle by the fire-drying process. It makes the pelt side look dark and unprime as well.

In setting for mink, follow water setting as long as possible and set under over-hanging roots and banks where the tracks are seen or where a log lies up so as to permit the mink's passing under and, in short, wherever the game is most



MUSKRAT HOUSE.

apt to pass thru or under as is the mink's habit. Where there is no timber and the banks are low, then the main dependence is on making a trench as described and pinning down a portion of muskrat.

I will also say that I have found rat houses

a capital place to catch mink. Both coon and mink visit rat houses that are nearest to shore; knowing this, after you have caught off the rats, dig a hole in the side of the house and throw in a portion of a muskrat. Set your trap at entrance covered with water or thin mud and if there is a mink or coon that visits the house you will get him if things don't go contrary, the trap fail to get hold or some other ill luck occur.

When a coon is expected a long hardwood stake should be used. I have had a number blunder into rat traps, chew the soft popple or willow stake all to pieces and go off with the trap. And they have never returned one yet.

A word more on the mink question. When I find a place that mink are most sure to pass thru or under, I do not use bait. Especially if the mink is old and cunning and has been trapped, or one that has been nipped by a trap and become "bait shy." For these I make blind sets only. My trap and chain is under water and also my stake.

The trap is barely covered by water or mud and an old leaf or two that is watersoaked is laid on the trap. If I think there is a chance for the mink to avoid the trap, I lean up an old chunk or dead stick against the bank with the lower end just beyond the trap next to deep water. It is plain to be seen that if he goes be-

hind that prop he will hear something drop. I have caught many a mink in this manner that have eluded all the trappers in my neighborhood.

Several years ago an old trapper and myself fought a friendly contest in our endeavor to catch a sly old dog mink. He traveled on a creek which was a mere thread. My competitor was a strong believer in bait and before a week had passed he had tried muskrat, fish, birds and frogs. The mink passed nightly but ignored all these offerings, the main reason being that a meadow near by teemed with mice.

Calling the mink a "bad one," he invited me to try my hand. He had about a dozen baited traps set. I took one good No. 1 Newhouse and selecting a place where the bank was undermined and the mink's track could be seen on a shelf, I placed my trap next to the bank, placed the leaves of a long soaked weed over the trap which was barely submerged. I then took a large weed that was full of branches and thrust it in the bed of the stream, so close to the trap that the mink would be liable to pass between it and the bank. The next morning I met the old trapper coming back from his round. "Well, did you get 'im?" I asked.

"No, but you did and I killed him for ye and he's a whalin' big one," he added rather dryly. His disappointment was but poorly disguised

and like the "fox and grape fable" he comforted his chagrin by saying: "He probably blundered in, with so many traps set, how could he help it? I'd a ketched 'im in a night or two." I did not dispute this statement, but kept a deal of thinking.

All thru November skunks will be visiting old dens looking up winter quarters to suit and wandering with their usual lawlessness. By placing traps in the entrance of these holes you will catch some of the striped gentry, but your catch will be vastly greater if you bait. Many skunks only look down a hole and do not enter, which they would do if you place a bait of muskrat, rabbit or chicken below the trap at each setting. The skunk is such a glutton that altho he may be gorged to repletion he will still try to encompass more if it is food to his liking.

Quite a number of trappers wish to know how skunk catching can be done without odor. Boys, don't be afraid of the odor. Wear old clothes and discard them at the close of day. The perfume that the first skunk gives off when you dispatch him is an advantage to you. It draws others. So having caught one, keep your trap there. I have had a trap set at a den for a long time without its being disturbed, but as soon as I caught one several more got fast in quick succession.

CHAPTER XXV.

LAND TRAPPING.



FOLLOWING animals are trapped on land and in what is known as land sets: Wolf, marten, bear, weasel, mountain lion, badger, fisher, lynx, wild cat, civet, skunk, ring-tail cat, and opossum. Fox are largely trapped on land, but in some sections they are taken in water at bait sets; mink and coon are trapped on land as well as in the water.

Wolves, being one of the shrewdest, methods for catching them will be described first.

WOLVES AND COYOTES.

Find an old trail that the coyotes use, plant your trap in as narrow a part of the trail as possible, fasten trap to a good toggle, bury the toggle to one side of the trail. Have a blanket while doing the work. Place all dirt on the blanket. After trap, chain and toggle are put in place and wool has been put under pan, cover all nicely with dirt from the blanket. The dirt should not be over one-fourth of an inch deep.

Leave everything looking as it did before you began.

Now have an old stick (not a fresh cut one) the size of your wrist and long enough to reach across the trail and lay it about eight inches from the trap and crosswise of the trail. A coyote won't step on the stick, but will step over it every time. Use caution and leave no human signs and you will get your coyote. This method is used successfully in Texas, says a wolf trapper of that state.

The wolf is a pretty hard animal to trap, writes a Minnesota trapper. Whenever he gets near a bait he is always shy and that is because he can smell iron, but if you put a trap in his track and he comes along he will walk right in and get caught. That is because he thinks there is no danger in his own tracks. There are many times that he falls a victim to the trap that way. I will describe a set most trappers use here in the winter when there is snow on the ground.

They take some horse manure and haul it out on some plowed field and make two heaps not very high and in one of them they put the bait and in the other the traps. Four traps are mostly used, secured to a log. Care must be taken not to cover the traps too much. The best bait, I think, is the entrails from a hog.

Trappers for wolves should not use smaller

than No. 3 traps. The No. 4 is known as the wolf trap and will be found suitable for all sections. If wolves have been feasting off the carcass of a sheep, calf or other animal, set your trap there. If you have plenty of traps a half dozen set within eighteen inches of the carcass and carefully covered up, should make a catch.

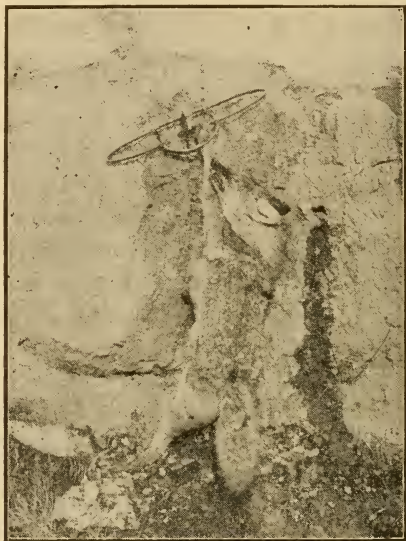
The trap and fastening, a weight and clog, be it remembered, should be covered. If you dig up the ground in order to conceal the clog, have a basket or something along to put the earth in and carry away some distance. Everything must be left as natural as possible.

Another method is to hang up a dead chicken and place a trap directly under it. Hang the fowl about three feet high.

The secret, at least one of them, in trapping is to leave everything as natural as possible after setting your trap. Most animals will regard with suspicion if there is much change around their den. In the case of skunk it perhaps is not so particular, yet the trapper who carefully conceals his traps will be well repaid for so doing. Even when trapping for skunk you never know what animal may come along.

Then to be ready, adopt the rule of always carefully covering your traps. We all admit that the fox and wolf are shy animals and are rather difficult to catch, yet they are frequently caught

by trappers who are only trapping for opossum or skunk. These trappers, of course, had their traps carefully hidden. While fox and wolf are among the smartest animals, yet they can be



WOLF CAUGHT AT "BANK SET".

caught, as the thousands of pelts sold annually is evidence. See to it, trappers, that every trap is set and covered properly and you will be rewarded some morning on visiting your trap by a fox or wolf if they are many in your section.

Now a word about trapping those cute little coyotes, writes a California trapper. The best way to catch anything that walks on four legs is to make a fool of them. Some people may think that is "hot air," but I know better.

The best way to fool an old coyote is to take a fresh sheep skin and drag it, you riding on a horse, for a mile or so in the hills near where your man is in the habit of going, (now be sure you don't touch it with your hands) until you find an open hill not too high. Have a stake there before hand and your traps set. The traps should be left lying in the sheep pen for a week before setting.

When you get to the stake, hang your pelt on it, so when the wind blows the pelt will move. Mr. Coyote will be sure to find the trail you have made and will follow it until it sees the pelt, and then he will walk around it for a night or so, but he will not get too near the first night or three or four nights, but he will try to pull the skin down and he will forget about the traps and everything else and will be taken in just like all the other suckers.

My outfit consists of the following, writes a well known Western trapper: Sixty No. 3 New-house single spring otter traps (I find they will hold any wolf and are easier set than double spring traps), an axe, 60 stakes 16 or 18 inches

long, 12 or 15 pounds of wool or cotton, wool preferred, 20 stakes 10 or 12 inches long, a piece of oil cloth or canvas about 3 feet square, a light wagon and team, a good rifle and four stag hounds. The hounds are trained so stay on the wagon until told to go, and will nearly always get a coyote when sent after him.

In setting traps I choose a high knoll or a bare spot on the range — often the bed of a dry creek — where I see plenty of signs, and then proceed as follows: Stick one of the small stakes where I want the bait and from 20 to 24 inches from it lay a trap and stretch the chain straight back, drive stake through chain ring and drive down below the surface of the ground an inch or more. Then fix two more traps the same way at the opposite points of a triangle. Set your traps and place a good wad of wool under the pan so that rabbits and other small game will not spring it, and then proceed to bed the traps and chains, placing all the dirt on the canvas.

Now place your bait (I always use live bait if weather is not too cold, but have had good success with dead bait). Lay an old dead hen or other fowl in the center and drive small stakes through it into the ground firmly; cover end of stake with wing or feathers of bait.

Now step back and take dirt from the canvas

and cover traps $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{5}{8}$ inch deep; also cover your own tracks, and brush over all with a bush. If traps are well set it will be hard to tell where the traps lay. All dirt that is left on canvas should be taken away some distance and dropped. In using live bait proceed the same way with traps, only bait should be tied by the feet with a good stout cord and place a can of corn and one of water within reach of fowl, both cans to be set into the ground level with surface. Do not go nearer to traps than to see that they are not sprung and do not shoot or club game in the traps, but choke to death with a copper wire on the end of a pole; a good stout cord will answer the same purpose. Wipe all blood off traps before setting again and brush out your tracks as before, and above all, don't spit tobacco juice near your traps.

After catching one wolf or coyote, do not use more bait, as the scent is strong enough to draw all that comes near. I do not use any patent decoy or scents, as I consider them useless for any game. The only scent I use is what I make myself, and then only use it from February to April. In the summer I gather up four or five bitch dogs and as fast as they come in heat I kill them and take the organs of generation and pickle them in wide mouth bottles with alcohol

enough to cover. I sprinkle a few drops on a stone or bush, stick in center between traps, but use no other bait. This is also good for fox.

The above method is the same as I learned it from an old Hudson Bay trapper, Peirre Dev-erany, who was born in 1817 and had trapped all through the British possessions and the Rocky Mountains, with whom I trapped for several years.

LYNX, FISHER, WILD CAT.

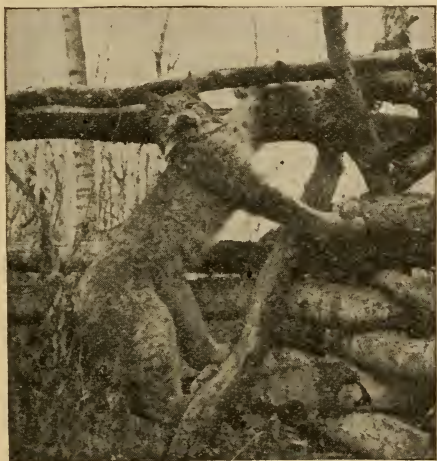
Here is the method for the capture of a lynx. Where lynx follow up trails, build a house around a tree, of brush, etc., leaving a small door fronting the trail. Cut a rabbit or bird and tie it to the tree in the house. Place a No. 4 or 14 Newhouse trap at the entrance, covering with cotton or wool and boughs. Fasten your trap chain to a clog; drag a rabbit up and down the trail past the house.

For a fisher build a small house and use No. 1½ Newhouse trap and bait with rabbit, bits of deer meat with the hair and skin left on is also a good bait. Use a sliding pole or heavy drag, as the fisher sometimes chews the drag to pieces.

Wild cat are trapped about the same as lynx. There are a great many caught by making a cubby or enclosure where they cross or frequent in search of birds, rabbits, etc. The bait is placed

back in the cubby and may be either bird, rabbit or fish.

The No. 1½ and No. 2 Newhouse are used principally, altho the Victor No. 3 and Oneida Jump No. 4 are both adapted to wild cat trapping.



LYNX CAUGHT IN STEEL TRAP.

The methods given for catching wild cat, lynx and fisher can and are used by trappers for each of these animals. That is, the set described for wild cat can be used for fisher and lynx, the lynx set for fisher and wild cat and the fisher set for

lynx and wild cat. In other words, a set for any of these animals is good for all three.

MARTEN.

To begin with, when trapping for marten, says an Oregon trapper, use only the best traps — No. 1 or $1\frac{1}{2}$ is plenty large enough — in fact, larger traps cannot be used conveniently, for the reason that when the ground is covered with deep snow and your traps are all fastened high up on trees you must set them with your hands. With nothing to rest your trap on except your knee and with fingers like icicles it will require all the strength in your left hand to mash together the spring of a good No. $1\frac{1}{2}$, while with the right you adjust the pan and latch.

Do not fool away your time with a few traps, but of course just how many you can use depends on how thick game is. View out your prospective line during summer time. Some important essentials are: pick out a line in very heavy timber, preferably along some high ridge; work gradually up or down hill and avoid very steep places; a line free from underbrush is desirable unless snow gets deep enough to cover it all up; run your line as near straight as possible; avoid making sharp turns for your blazes will at times be very hard to see owing to snow on the bark

of the trees and once off the line it may be hard to find.

Do not make camps too far apart, eight miles



MARTEN CAUGHT IN SHELF SET.

is far enough when the snow is soft and deep. Get your traps all strung out before snow comes and have everything ready so as to lighten your

work when the time comes, for, even then, it will be hard enough.

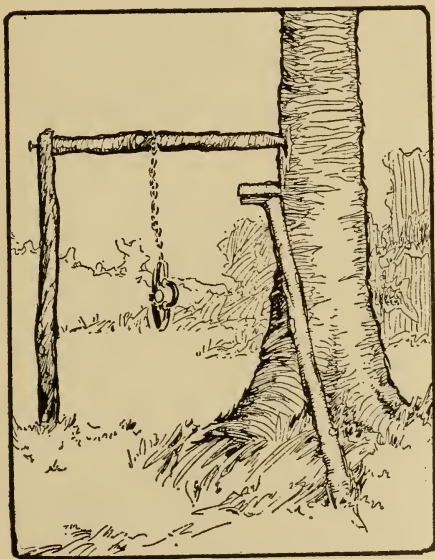
Now, in setting traps, you cannot pick out likely places — hollow trees, etc. — do not leave the line even for a few feet to set one in that hollow tree else the trap is apt to be forgotten and lost. Give every tree where a trap is left some mark to indicate its presence.

Use wire staples to fasten traps to the trees and they should be fastened three or four feet above the ground. Set the trap or bend the spring around to fit the curve of the tree. Now drive a 12 penny nail in the tree an inch or so, place the trap so that the cross piece rests flat on the nail and drive two smaller ones between the spring and your trap rests same as if set on the ground. Nail small piece of bait (squirrel, rabbit, or bird is best) eight or ten inches above the trap.

If you desire to shelter the trap, drive a couple of wooden pegs above the bait and lay on a piece of bark or some boughs — this is not necessary if traps are to be looked after regularly, for you can keep the snow brushed off. A large piece of bait is not necessary, but in rebaiting do not remove the old bait, just nail up another. Sometimes I have a half dozen baits by each trap. It is well to try each trap occasionally to see if it will spring with just the right pressure. If

the bait is scarce, set the traps any way and you will soon have enough birds and squirrels.

In visiting the line, always make your pack as light as possible, four or five pounds of bait, a hatchet, a few nails and staples and a small



SHELF SET AND FASTENING.

Stevens 22 cal. pistol is all you will be apt to need for one hundred traps. If you are a trapper by nature, you will know where to put the traps, close together and where there is a probability

of making a catch. Some places I put a trap every fifty yards and some places one-half mile apart. Keep your traps freshly baited and do something with each trap every three or four days, if nothing more than to rub a piece of bacon rind or rabbit entrails from the top of the snow to the bait. A drag is good at times and in some places. Scent is good if bait is frozen.

WHITE WEASEL.

When trapping weasel, writes a Northern trapper, I set my traps near small streams or in swamps, old ditches, beneath old roots and under shelving banks, near running water, and sometimes they may be caught in woodchuck holes. The white weasel and all other weasel are regular dummies, going headlong into a trap, even if they are in plain view. You don't need to cover up your trap at all unless you want to, as the weasel will walk right in to get the bait and click bang and you have your weasel hard and fast.

The best bait for weasel is rabbit heads, chicken heads and squirrels. The same sets will also catch mink, but the traps must be covered in that case unless you are making blind sets. I have caught a good many weasel in my mink sets and then again, I have caught them in old muskrat holes or dens along the banks of small

streams and also near river banks in deserted rat dens.

White weasel or ermine are found in Canada



SQUIRREL CAUGHT ON STUMP.

and the New England States as well as all other states bordering on Canada, but rarely farther south.

These animals, like all of the weasel kind, are active in their search for food and are easily attracted to bait. They are the smallest of the animals now being sought after by American trappers for their fur. The No. 0 is used in taking this animal, altho many trappers prefer the No. 1 and 1½ as they catch high and the trapper usually finds the weasel dead on his arrival.

MINK.

My father was a successful mink trapper but only trapped when they became bothersome says an experienced trapper. He made mostly dry sets. He would look carefully at a hole in bank of stream or pond, then cut out a place for the trap, drive a stake in bottom of the trap bed, coil trap chain around it and set trap on top, then cover with finely cut grass, a big leaf or writing paper and lastly with the material he took off the top trap bed. Then he cleared all extra dirt away and put the bait in the edge of the hole or under the edge of a stick or stone, if there was one near the hole.

I went with him once and I said, "Some trappers stick the bait on a stick." He looked at me and said, "You young goose, did you ever know a mink to eat part of a muskrat and hang the rest on a stick?" He used bird, muskrat and fish

for bait. If bird, he tore some feathers out and made it appear as if some mink had dragged the bait there and hid it.

For a mink that is not hungry, I find an old muskrat den or a runway through a drift pile is a good place. The great trouble with these two last sets is, the rabbits are liable to get into the trap instead of the mink. There are a good many ways to catch mink, and there are mink that will evade a good many well laid plans for their capture.

My most successful plan for catching mink is this: I get a hollow log — it needn't be a long one — and if it is open at both ends I close up one end, than a little back of that I put my bait. Now at the other end if the entrance is not slanting so that the mink would run into it easily, I make it so. I then put the trap inside, about a foot from the entrance. The mink will run into the log because he smells the bait, or simply because it is the nature of the beast to make the run of every hollow log he comes to. Finding the other end closed he will have to come back and he is sure to be caught either going or coming. Trailing bait along the ground and up to the back of the log makes the results surer, as mink are great on the scent.

About mink. One man said mink would not take anything dead unless he was very hungry.

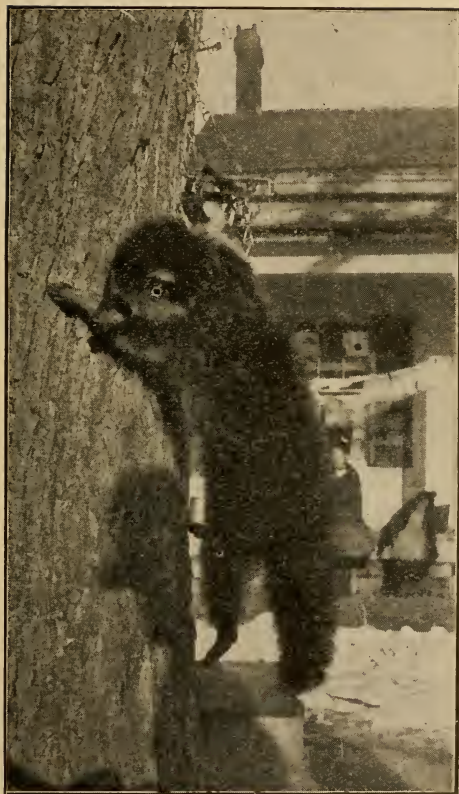
Now Brother Trappers, you all know a mink will take anything he finds dead and drag it into a hole if he can and when you find where a mink has dragged something into a hole that is a never failing set for if he is not in the hole when you find it he will sure come back to it.

RACCOON.

Hollow trees in swamps are the favorite denning places of the raccoon, writes an Eastern trapper of years of experience, but in some sections he is found nearly as often in holes among ledges. If there is a rocky hill or mountain side on your line, inspect it thoroughly. The occupied dens may easily be told by the trodden appearance of the ground about the entrance and an occasional tuft of hair on the projecting edges of the stone. Here are the places for your traps.

Set your traps just outside the entrance, cover well with leaves and rotten wood, and fasten to a clog. We say outside the entrance, for if the trap be placed at a point where the animal is obliged to assume a crouching posture, it will be sprung by the creature's belly, and you will find your trap empty save for a fringe of hair. Even if the dens show no signs of recent occupation, a few traps can hardly be misplaced, for the raccoon, like every other animal, frequently goes on foraging trips long distances

RACCOON CAUGHT IN ONEIDA JUMP.



from his actual home, taking up temporary quarters in places like those above described.

Whenever there is a brook or creek in the vicinity of good raccoon ground, look along it carefully for signs. The raccoon follows the streams almost as persistently as the mink in quest of frogs, fish or clams, and his track may be easily found along the muddy borders, the print of the hind foot strikingly resembling that of a baby's bare foot. He is a far less skillful fisher than the mink, usually confining himself to such unwary swimmers as venture up into the shallow water near the bank. He seldom if ever I believe, goes into deep water.

If you find evidence that a raccoon is patrolling a stream, place a trap without bait at the end of every log affording a crossing place. The raccoon seldom wades or swims when he can find dry footing.

If you wish to trap the raccoon by baiting, you will find nothing that he likes better than an old salt fish skin that has been made odorous by being well smoked. It is not a bad idea to do the smoking near where you are to set the trap. Build up a little stick fire in the woods, hold the fish skin impaled on a green stick, over it until it is thoroughly heated and smoked through, and an odor will be created that will pervade the woods for rods around. And of course if this

scent reaches the nostrils of any near-by ring-tail that is sleeping away the day, he will lose no time after nightfall in tracing out the source of the appetizing smell, and endeavoring to make a supper off his favorite food. Mice, squirrel, frogs and chickenheads are all good baits, and they are equally good for mink.

Most trappers prefer the No. 1½ Newhouse for raccoon although some use the No. 2 double spring. The Oneida Jump No. 2 and 2½ are also good coon traps as is the H. & N. No. 2. The Stop Thief No. 3½ is also used for coon. .

FOXES.

Now I will tell you how foxes can be caught on land when the ground is frozen, writes a New England trapper. Take a large bait, entrails or anything that a fox will eat, and put it in some field where the foxes travel; put out with this bait three bags of buckwheat chaff. Don't set any traps until foxes begin to eat bait and walk on chaff. Then take a No. 2 Newhouse trap, smoke it over burning green fir boughs, and smear it with equal parts of oil of amber and beeswax; also, smear the chain and use leather mitts to set trap with, for it is no use setting unless you do. Bury the trap about a foot from the bait, and cover it with chaff. Make everything level and natural.

When you catch a fox, take him out with mitts on and set again if you haven't a clean trap to put in its place. Always set a clean trap if possible.

My way of catching foxes, writes a Georgia



RED FOX CAUGHT AT DRY LAND SET.

trapper is as follows: I get a lot of dry dust, put it in the hen house and let it stay until I get ready to make my sets; then I take what I can carry handily in a sack to where the foxes "use", dig a hole deep enough for my trap, place a piece of burnt bacon in a hole, cover it up with

the dust, burn more bacon, letting the grease drop on and around the dust.

I fix a good many of these places but I do not set my traps the first trip. The next trip I carry my traps with me. If the foxes have found my bait they will dig it out. I then set my trap in the bottom of the hole, driving a stake down in the hole to fasten the trap to. Cover the trap chain and all with dust. I do not put new bait in the hole, but burn more bacon on top.

Try this, brother trappers, and watch results. Do not set traps where the bait has not been disturbed. Carry away all fresh dirt and handle your traps with gloves. In water trapping, form a natural surface over your traps and you will get furs.

I see different ways to catch the fox. They are all right but no person can tell another and guarantee success. The man or boy who sets right will get the fur but careless ones will not. I am going to tell amateurs and boys the secret of an old time trapper. He is alive yet and I guess had a few traps set (altho over eighty years old.) He told me the secret and said at that time he had never told any one but me.

First put out offal of butchering such as beef head; pick out a good place where foxes travel; at the same time, singe the fur on a rabbit or two and put near where you want to set

trap; commence baiting early and go there often. Go past close to where you want to set a trap; don't tramp around much but go on thru, not leaving the end of your trail there; renewing bait and singed rabbit fur as needed.

When ready to set traps, boil them in ashes. Then after drying, fasten traps to bottom of a barrel and burn slowly a lot of rabbit fur under them; handle as little as possible. Set carefully and catch your fox if you can and you can if you are careful enough. He said he caught fifteen in one place that way in one winter. Fasten trap to drag so he can go away and not spoil set.

My best method is to set my trap in an old log road or path where there is no traveling done. We should set the trap level with the ground. The trap should be a No. 2 Newhouse which is the best fox trap made.

OPOSSUM.

The opossum is not a cunning animal and takes bait readily. It is found in the Southern and Central States principally. This animal cannot live in the extreme north as they die from the severe weather.

They are caught principally in No. 1 Newhouse traps, at dens or places they frequent in search of food. Almost any fresh meat is good bait: rabbit, squirrel, bird, chicken, etc.

The trap can be baited when used at den but this is not necessary. Along their trails and in thickets they visit a piece of bait suspended a foot or so above the ground and trap under, carefully covered, will catch the opossum. They are also caught by building a pen of stakes, or



OPOSSUM CAUGHT IN NO. 1 NEWHOUSE.

chunks and stones placing bait in the back part and setting trap in front also at hollow logs where they frequently live.

No. 1 Newhouse trap is used a great deal for this animal, although the No. 1 Victor will hold them; No. 2 Oneida Jump, or No. 2 Tree Trap, are proper sizes to catch this animal.

The Tree Trap can be used to advantage in catching opossum as this trap is so made that it can be nailed to a tree or stump and baited.

BADGER.

The badger is a strong animal for its size, and also slow in its movements. The No. 2 is as small a trap as trappers generally use. The traps are set at the entrance to their dens, carefully covered and should be fastened to a moveable clog.

In setting for badger the trapper should carefully remove enough earth to bed the trap level. A piece of paper or long grass is then carefully placed on trap, and this covered lightly with the same material removed in making the excavation. This set is apt to reward the trapper. If care is taken in making this set a fox may be caught, as they sometimes frequent dens used by badger.

SKUNK.

A Skunk is one of the easiest animals, whose fur is valuable that there is to trap. This animal is one of the first to become prime in the fall. Likewise it sheds early in the spring. When the weather becomes severe they den up, coming out only on the warmer nights. In the North they are seldom out after real winter be-

gins, while in the South, they seek food more or less throughout the winter.

The greatest number are trapped at their dens which can be easily told by the long tail hairs found in and near the month of den. These



BLACK SKUNK IN NO. 1½ VICTOR.

hairs may be either white or black, but are usually both — one end white and the other black. These hairs are from three to five inches in length.

The dens can also be told by their droppings or manure which is usually found a few feet to

one side of the den. Skunk "droppings" can be told by observing closely as it contains parts of bugs, grass-hoppers, etc., the skunk being very fond of these.

At such dens place your trap which should be a No. 1 Newhouse, No. 1½ Victor, or No. 2 Jump. While catches may be made without any covering it is best to secret the trap carefully for a fox might happen along, or if near water, a mink.

The best place to put the trap is just at the entrance of den so that an animal in coming out will get caught also one going near to the den, but not entering as they often do.

Remove the earth sufficient to bed the trap so that after it is covered the covering will be on a level with the surroundings. Make a covering with whatever you removed. If there is grass in mouth of den, cover with grass, if leaves, cover with leaves, etc.

Another good set is to find where skunk are feeding, digging for insects, or their trails leading from one den to another, and make a cubby, placing bait in it, and setting trap. Bait should be rabbit, squirrel, chicken, bird, or in fact, almost any kind of meat.

BAITED AND CAUGHT AT CUBBY SET.



CIVET.

Civet or civet cats are caught much the same way as skunk. This is the little spotted animal often called pole cat, and smaller than the skunk. Skunks have a spot on the head and two stripes while the civet has several stripes and these sometimes run across the body instead of along the back from head to tail as on the skunk.

This animal is caught much the same as the skunk, but being much smaller does not require as strong a trap and the No. 1 of most any make will usually hold this animal. Bait the same as for skunk.

RING TAIL CAT.

The Ring Tail cat or Basarisk is found principally in Texas, although there are some in California, Oregon and Washington. They can be trapped by baiting with insects, frogs or mice. The No. 1 Newhouse, or No. 1½ Victor, or No. 2 Oneida Jump are correct sizes for this animal.

The traps can be set about as for skunk or may be placed on logs and baited or the bait can be nailed to a tree that they frequent, the trap placed beneath and carefully covered.

BEAR.

Bear are caught after finding a place that they visit in search of food, by building a "cubby", made by driving old dry stakes in the ground so as to form a V-shaped pen. Then cover all except the entrance with green brush. This should be three feet high, about two wide, and about three or four feet long.

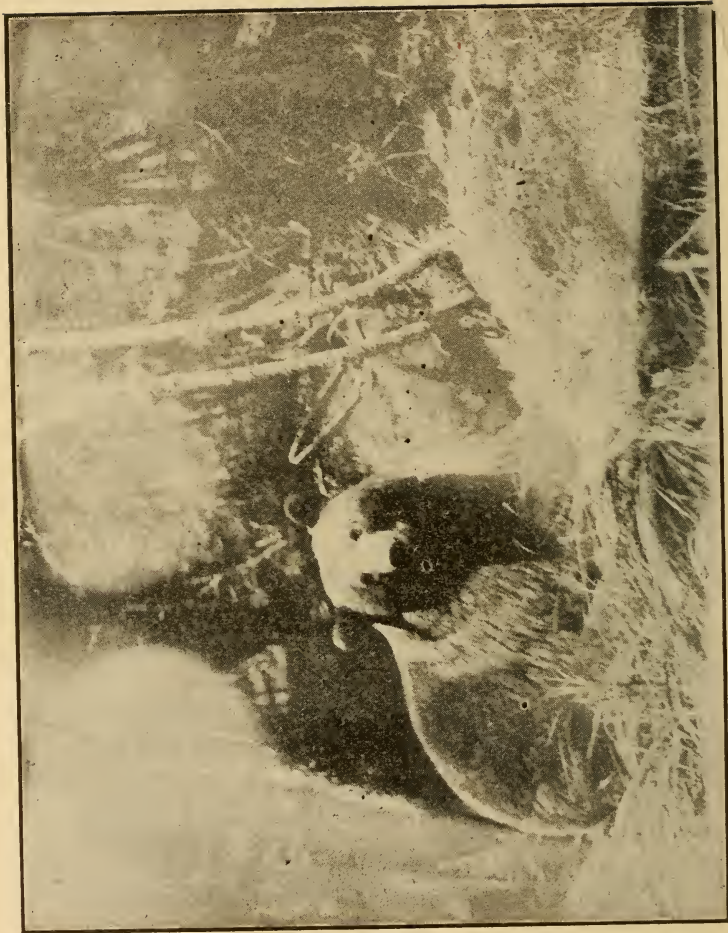
If a rock or old log is laying where the cubby is to be built it can be used for one side. The "cubby" must be built strong or the bear is apt to tear it down and secure the bait without getting caught.

The bait can be a piece of dead horse, hog, sheep, or most any animal, and the more it stinks, the better. Fish is also good bait.

Stake the bait back in the cubby, and set the trap at the entrance. Cover carefully. The trap should be fastened to a clog weighing thirty pounds or more. This clog should be several feet long and if a few knots are left on so much the better.

The Nos. 5, 15, and 150, are all adapted for black bear, while the No. 6 is especially designed for grizzly bear. It is the largest trap made.

In setting bear traps the Newhouse clamp, described elsewhere, is much used. It is not very safe for a lone trapper in the forest to un-



THERE TO STAY — IN A NEWHOUSE.

dertake the setting of a powerful steel trap without clamps.

MOUNTAIN LION.

Mountain lion are powerful animals yet they are successfully caught in No. 4½ Newhouse traps.



MOUNTAIN LION SECURELY CAUGHT.

If you find where mountain lions have killed an animal and left part of it there is the place to set a trap for they are almost sure to return in a night or two.

This animal is also frequently caught by setting a trap where deer or other game has been

killed. The chances are good if there is a lion near it will smell the blood and be attracted to the spot as many hunters know that have killed game, dressed and left it until the next day, to find on returning that a lion had been there and helped itself.

In setting for this animal the trap should be fastened to a clog — never solid — as they are quite strong.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WATER TRAPPING.



HERE is where the steel trap reveals its superiority over all other traps, for the home-made ones cannot be used for water sets. Strictly speaking all the "water animals" that are valuable for fur are the otter, beaver and muskrat, although large numbers of both coon and mink are caught at water sets, as they frequent the streams, ponds and lakes, a great deal in search of food.

In the New England states, as well as some other sections, foxes are caught in water sets mostly at springs. They are generally trapped this way in the fall and early winter before freezing weather.

BEAVER.

The beaver, as I know him, is a very shy and cunning animal, always on guard against danger, which makes it pretty hard to trap, unless the trapper thoroughly knows his ways and habits. My experience has been wholly confined to the

Rocky Mountains of British Columbia and State of Washington, writes a trapper of experience.

The beaver lives along streams or lakes. On streams he builds dams, thus making a reservoir or lake. Sometimes he builds a dam at the outlet of a natural lake, thus raising the height of the water. After he has prepared his dam and built his home, he commences to gather food, which consists of branches of trees, bushes, and even small trees themselves. He always chooses tender, green ones. These he puts in the bottom of the lake or stream in his hut or lodge. If he be disturbed at any time he will stop work for several days and live off the boughs already gathered and sunken, and it is almost impossible to get him until he commences to gather again.

He usually does his work among young sprouts which grow along the bank of his lake or stream. Sometimes he will go a short ways up the stream and float the boughs down to his dam or hut, and then sink them to the bottom, so when the ice gets thick he has sufficient food sunk in the water to last him.

There are several different ways to trap him, but I only know of two or three, and will attempt to give them. The first thing is a No. 3 or 4 Newhouse trap with a long chain and big ring. Then the best way is to take some bait, (described elsewhere), cut some small twigs, one for each



BEAVER, TRAP AND TRAPPER.

trap, and having found the dam of a family of beavers, put on a pair of rubber boots, or remove your boots, and wade up stream along the shore, or go in a boat to where they have been at work gathering the sprouts. Be very careful, and don't step out of the water on the land so they can see your tracks or scent you, for should his suspicion become aroused by any human smell the beaver will stay in his home for several days, thus making it tedious work to trap him. When you have a place selected where the bank is steep, fasten your trap chain to a strong stake beneath the water. Then fasten a heavy rock to your trap and dig a flat place in the bank a few inches beneath the water, placing your trap thereon. Then dip the twig into the "madcin" and stick the upper end in the ground, just out of the water, and leaning over the trap. Now your trap is ready.

The beaver comes out of his hut as it grows dark and starts toward the ground where he has his feeding place. As he swims along up the stream, his nose comes in contact with a familiar smell, and he will swim right up to the twig to investigate. As his foot touches the ground the trap springs and he at once plunges for deep water. The stone rolls down to the bottom and pulls him under and he drowns in a short time. He makes no noise to scare the rest, and before

he has time to gnaw off his foot he is drowned. In this way you can catch the whole family.

Another way is to cut a hole in the top of dam and set the trap just below the top of water just under the hole. Just as soon as he comes out his eyes tell him his dam needs fixing. He goes at it at once, and all the rest help him. He gets into the trap often before the eyes of the rest, and they will leave the place at once never to return.

Another way is to cover the trap carefully in the path where the beaver goes from the water to his feeding grounds, but doing this it is liable to scare the rest of them entirely away.

OTTER.

The otter is a pretty hard animal to catch. When I set a trap in an otter hole, I cut a chunk of snow with an axe a short distance away and set over the hole, covering it all over with loose snow. That prevents it from freezing up for some time.

The best time to catch otter is in March when the first thaw comes. I have kept traps set all winter for an otter and then got him in the spring. The trap should be set a little to one side of the hole in ten inches of water. I caught an otter once in an otter hole so deep that I had to put in an armful of cedar brush, so as to make it

the right depth, and when he came to slide around there he got a surprise, writes a Colorado trapper.

* * *

To trap otter cut a log about 18 inches in diameter and about 7 or 8 feet in length, then cut half off five or six inches of one end of the log. Now float your log with the cut end down. Fasten your trap chain to the side of the log. Float your log to just below the point of a stream or a little above an otter slide.

See that the log end on which the trap rests is below the water so as to give the otter a chance to climb onto the log to investigate the scent which should be "Oil of Anise" smeared on to a stick and set upright on the log. If you use good judgment in placing your log-float, you can count the "balls" on the otter's feet at every set.

I find where the otter comes out of the water, writes an Arkansas trapper, to dung, or slide, as some term it, and I take a No. 4 steel trap and set it where he comes out of the water and about two inches under. Great care should be taken in setting a trap for an otter, not to go too close to the slides. Have a pair of rubber boots and wade in the stream along the edge to where the slide is. Set your trap so as to leave everything

LARGE OTTER CAUGHT IN NO. 3 NEWHOUSE.



just as you found it, as near as possible; if handy, set from boat. No bait is required.

Fasten your chain to a pole, say 6 or 8 feet long, leaving some limbs on one end to prevent ring of chain from coming off and wire the other end to a bush or something of that sort as far out in the water as you can so the otter can get into deep water and drown. Have a pole driven in the ground out in the water so the otter will get tangled around the pole. This will prevent him from getting loose, because he has no purchase to pull as he would have if out on the bank.

I "hung up" three one night last fall. When I went to my traps I found one otter that measured 6 feet from tip of nose to tip of tail. I found an otter toe in one trap, another trap being taken off by an otter, as the chain pulled loose at the spring. I was fortunate in finding the otter that got away with the trap four days later, tangled up in some vines about two hundred yards from where he was caught; he measured 5 feet and 11 inches.

MINK.

An excellent way to catch mink is to take a fish, cut it in pieces and tie all of them except one or two onto a large stick and fasten it out about two feet from the shore in shallow water. Set

your trap about half-way between the shore and the stick and have it fixed so that the covering will make a little mound above the water. Throw the other pieces of fish down on the shore and you will get every mink that comes along. Be sure that your trap is staked in as deep water as is possible, so they will not get away.

In setting any trap it is a very good thing to have rubber boots and stand in the water while setting. Some trappers say it is foolishness because they are not afraid any way. Well, I have caught mink in an uncovered trap that was in plain sight and then again I couldn't get them to come near with the trap under water. Some mink are more careful than others and if you set for the wisest ones you will be sure to get them all.

I will give you a good mink set, writes a Minnesota trapper. Here is a trail along the edge of the water. Let us follow it until it takes to the water. In order to pass around a projection in the bank where the bank is so straight up that it is necessary for the animal to go into the edge of the water to pass around this obstruction, and in the edge of the water not more than two inches deep, level a place for the trap and press it down into the ground until the jaws are level with the surface, being careful to remove all mud from under the pan, giving it room for

free action. Stake the chain back into the water full length and press it down into the mud.

After doing this get a handful of dry dirt, pulverize it and let it fall gently over the trap, thoroughly covering it at least for a quarter of an inch, even and smooth in all places. Now about eight inches on each side of the trap place a small weed stalk an inch or two above the ground and directly over the path and if you will put a few spots of mud on it just where it crosses the path to give it the appearance of being rubbed against, you will catch every mink that runs this trail from either direction, and without bait or scent.

MUSKRAT.

When setting traps stake well out in the water, so that when the animal is caught he cannot get to land, and nine times out of ten when you visit the trap your game will be drowned. The trap should be in about three inches of water where rats frequent. If set 3 inches or deeper the trap is more apt to catch by the hind leg, which, being large, the bone is not broken so easily. For bait use white corn, apples, parsnips or turnips.

The idea advanced that the muskrat gnaws off his foot when caught is erroneous. There are times, however, when the trap has broken the

MUSKRAT CAUGHT IN A DOUBLE JAW.



bone in the leg and if the trap is a strong one, the animal frees himself by plunging about until the pressure of the jaws have cut thru the flesh. The flesh of the muskrat is not strong and when the jaws spring together, if they break the bone in the leg, which frequently happens, then the rat often frees himself before the arrival of the trapper.

It is a good plan when making the round of your traps to carry a stout club with which to tap game over the head, killing it, should it be yet alive when you arrive. The entrance of the muskrat's den is usually under water, unless the streams are very low, then you can often find them.

In the mouth of these dens is an excellent place to set traps, as game is passing in and out quite often and if traps are baited you are pretty sure to catch game in a day or two. Where rats have made a path from the water up the bank is another good place to set a trap. The trap should be set just at the edge of the water.

It is a good idea to cover up your trap, even when trapping for muskrat, for with continued trapping they become sly and learn to shun traps. Along the bank of most all streams green grass can be secured and this placed over your traps will enable you to catch game that otherwise would shun your trap. The trap should be

baited, but the covering up of trap and chain will greatly help in catching game. The earlier traps are visited in the morning the better, for should the game still be alive there will be less chance of it getting free.

COON.

Now just a word about trapping coon in water. Set trap in water and bait with fish. Now the right way to use fish is to cut it up in very small pieces, drop some on the ground and some in the water and when Mr. Coon comes along he will find that fish on the ground and then go to feeling in the water and the first thing he knows he is in the trap.

* * *

Here is my most successful set for coon. Find a log with one end out of water, and one end running into the water. Place a trap on the log an inch or so under water. Cover it with wet leaves all but the treadle. Then place a few grains of white corn on treadle pan. Mr. Coon will as sure put a foot down to investigate as he runs the log.

FOX.

I go around every fall in August and look for places to catch sly reynard, says an Eastern fox trapper. I look up all the warm springs back

in the hills and dig them out and leave a stick or rail there for a clog. I leave it just where I want it, so that they will get used to it.

About the middle of October I go and bait every place, using a piece of chicken or muskrat about as large as a butternut. I place it on a rock in the middle of the spring or about a foot from the bank and put a stone half-way between that and the bank just under water. Then I take a stone, the thinner the better. You can find enough of them around a ledge where the frost has scaled them off. I lay it on the rock that is just under the water so it will stick out of water. It ought to be 2 inches across each way.

I use the scent of the skunk on the sole of my boots so as to kill the scent and handle the bait with a "knife and fork," never with my hands. It won't be long before the bait is gone when I am ready to set my traps, then I move the middle stone and put the thin one on the pan of the trap so it will just stick out of the water. Try this and you will get your fox. Scatter three or four drops of fish oil around trap.

SPRING TRAPPING.

When setting traps for beaver and otter in the early open water, writes a Canadian of experience, the greatest difficulty and annoyance

the trapper has to contend against is the varying depths of the water caused by the melting of the snows during the day and the running down of the levels during the frosty nights. This, of course, applies more to rivers than to lakes, but as the rivers open so much earlier than the lakes it is on them the early trapping is prosecuted. It is most exasperating to visit one's trap in the morning and find by the signs that the beaver or otter had paid his visit and that the trap was out of order by being a couple of feet under water, or high and dry up the bank.

To avoid this close observation of the working of the water must be taken note of by the trapper. Weather conditions is a factor to be reckoned with. A rainy night and a cold frosty one have, of course, different effects, and must be considered with all their bearings by the would-be successful trapper. The best time to make a set or final adjustment of one's trap is as late in the afternoon as possible. Then one sees how much the stream has risen since morning, and calculate by his judgment how much it will recede during the coming frosty night. Or if rain has set in or is imminent before morning, how much further the rise will be.

With these daily and nightly variations of the water, of course, traps must be visited each morning and evening. It is therefore good poli-



A MORNING'S CATCH OF RATS.

cy at every early visit to make a level mark near each set, whereby in the evening when the trap is to be properly adjusted, the day's changes can be noticed with accuracy. Small streams, of course, fluctuate more than large rivers, the latter generally showing a steady increase in volume from the beginning of the break-up until the lake ice is all melted. There are many tributaries of large streams that one can easily jump across early in the morning, after a sharp frosty night, which are positively raging torrents at sundown. On streams with such wide variances in depth, trapping is almost impossible. At all events, a good deal rests on chance. One has to manage his trap with a large amount of guess work. Streams with a breadth of an acre or so move up and down with a greater degree of uniformity, and the trapper who pays close attention to the movements of the water and weather conditions can set his trap pretty accurately for business. A river such as I have mentioned last, whose feeders are a considerable distance up stream, generally falls a third of what it rose during the daytime. Thus, if you find that since morning the level has risen nine inches it will be safe to set your trap six inches under water. By this calculation there would be three inches over the jaws at the lowest ebb next morning, the night before being cold and dry.

I have caught both otter and beaver in traps set on a half submerged log, a place which makes an ideal set on waters that are liable to vary in height, as the log moves with the change of height and the trap is always in order. Another good place for a trap is on a floating island when such can be found, but these favorable places are not always obtainable. A beaver or otter will be caught in deeper water in the spring than in the fall. In the spring they swim about with more vigor and consequently displace more water in front of their breasts, their feet thereby, setting off the pan in what would at other seasons be too deep water.

A piece of castorum is the general lure used by most trappers for the animals I am treating of. In fact castorum is used for almost any animal. But a stronger "draw" for beaver or otter is a drop or two from the scent bag of the animal. The contents of this sac can be emptied into a small vial and carried about in the trapper's pocket to be used when required.

A small twig dipped in this and stuck in the bank back of the trap will cause any otter or beaver swimming past to come straight for the trap, regardless of consequences.

In setting a trap for these animals care must always be taken to douse all about the trap before leaving. This can be done from the canoe

or boat by flipping water with the flat of the paddle. A difficulty in setting spring traps is the planting of a picket to hold the trap. The banks are generally frozen even for considerable distance under water, and driving a picket or stake is impossible. One good way to overcome this condition when procurable is to fasten the trap chain to a good sized flat stone. Have a wire from this to the shore tied to some willow or root, and if anything is caught, with the wire you can drag everything ashore.

When stones are not to be procured a young spruce can be cut ten or twelve feet long of a size at the butt that the trap chain ring will pass over. Leave a good tuft of the head branches, removing all the rest down to the butt. The ring thus being assured of a clear run down to the tuft, the trap is set and the end of the pole made secure to the bank either by a piece of wire or by a cord. If the latter, care must be used to tie close down to the prong and the cord carefully covered with mud or something else to hide it from rabbits or other animals that would surely gnaw, thereby endangering the loss of your trap and animal.

Trapping, like everything else, to make it a success, must have proper attention. A man who sets a trap haphazard and visits it only occasionally cannot expect to be very successful.

SALT SET.

I use both the bait and blind set; the water set I think is the best, that is, in bitter cold weather when the ice is thick. My way of making, I call it the ice set, writes an interested trapper, is to take a piece of oil cloth or an old buggy top cover will do, and put about 5 pounds of salt in same and sew it up, having it about 2 inches thick. Don't make it too solid, leave it loose enough so you can work the most of the salt around the edges to bed the trap in.

Now puncture with a needle to let the fumes of salt through; cut a hole through the ice at edge of the water, scrape out hole to bed salt in; but first put a stone in the hole and bottom and side it up with stones to keep the mud from clogging the needle holes. Now you will wonder what the salt is for; simply to keep the ice from freezing the hole shut. I had nine of that kind of sets last winter and trapped 7 mink. The hole will never freeze shut. Always set trap under water.

Last winter I told my better half that I had better take my traps out of the run where I trap, as I couldn't make a water set, because they froze up over night. She said, "Why don't you put salt around your traps?" That put me to thinking so I got an old piece of oil cloth and

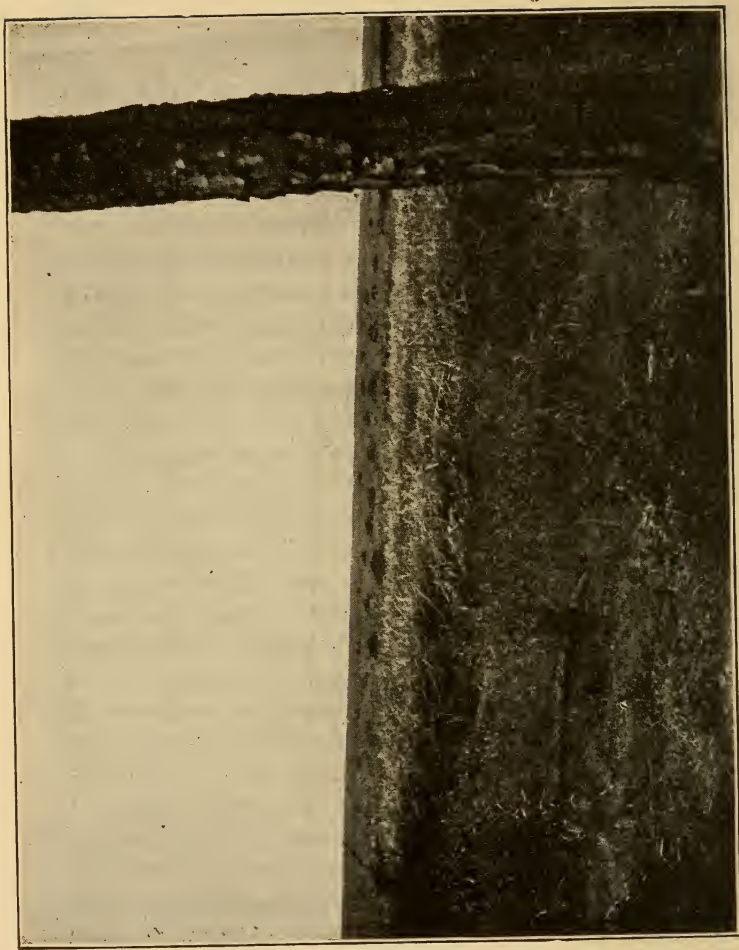
got her to make four bags for me on the sewing machine; I put a sack of salt, 5 pounds in each one, and used them as I have described.

BAD WATERS.

The marshy lands that are tributary to the Atlantic extend for hundreds of miles along the Maryland shore of Chesapeake Bay. These lands are sometimes entirely covered with a brackish water forced up by the tides from the sea, while at other times they are covered by the fresh water brought down by the flooded rivers from the higher lands of the back country.

Upon these vast extents of boggy wastes large numbers of fur bearing animals, mostly muskrats are annually caught, and many trappers make a good living from the fur and the meat which as "Marsh Rabbit" is served at the Bon Ton restaurants of the neighboring cities.

The water of these marshes varies much in its component parts at different places on the coast, caused by the varying quality of the streams which flow through them. This is plainly shown by its effect upon the traps used by the trappers of the different localities. While in some places the springs will stand apparently as well as in fresh water streams, in others they break very badly.



THE BLACK WATER MARSH.

Formerly at one point known as the "Black Water" region the trappers often lost nearly one-half their springs in a few days trapping, owing to the action of this peculiar water. Just what the cause of this action is has not yet been fully determined.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WHEN TO TRAP.



THE proper season to begin trapping is when cold weather comes. The old saying that fur is good any month that has an "R" in does not hold good except in the North. Even there September is too early to begin, yet muskrat and skunk are worth something as well as other furs. In the spring April is the last month with an "R." In most sections muskrat, bear, beaver, badger and otter are good all thru April, but other animals began shedding weeks before.

The rule for trappers to follow is to put off trapping in the fall until nights are frosty and the ground freezes.

Generally speaking in Canada and the more Northern States trappers can begin about November 1 and should cease March 1, with the exception of water animals, bear and badger, which may be trapped a month later. In the Central and Southern States trappers should not begin so early and should leave off in the spring from one to four weeks sooner — depending upon how far South they are located.

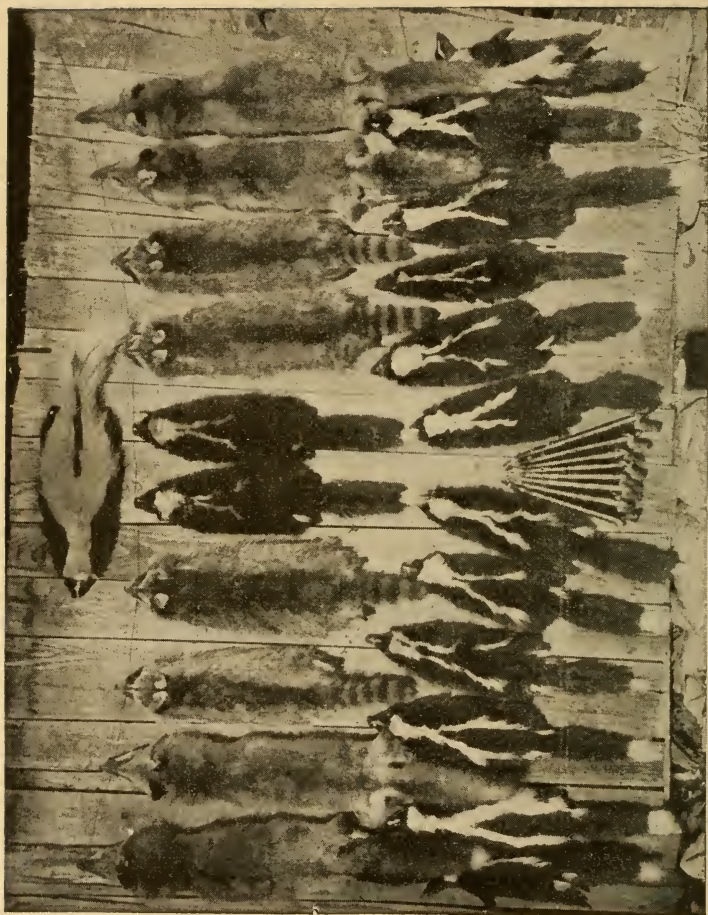
At the interior Hudson Bay posts, where their word is law, October 25 is appointed to begin and May 25th to quit hunting and trapping with the exception of bear, which are considered prime up to June 10. Remember that the above dates are for the interior or Northern H. B. Posts, which are located hundreds of miles north of the boundary between the United States and Canada.

The skunk is the first animal to become prime, then the coon, marten, fisher, mink and fox, but the latter does not become strictly prime until after a few days of snow, says an old Maine trapper. Rats and beaver are late in priming up as well as otter and mink, and tho the mink is not strictly a land animal, it becomes prime about with the later land animals. The bear, which is strictly a land animal, is not in good fur until snow comes and not strictly prime until February or March.

* * *

With the first frosts and cool days many trappers begin setting and baiting their traps. That it is easier to catch certain kinds of fur-bearing animals early in the season is known to most trappers and for this reason trapping in most localities is done too early in the season.

Some years ago when trapping was done even



JUST AFTER THE SEASON OPENS.

earlier than now, we examined mink skins that were classed as No. 4 and worth 10 or 15 cents, that, had they been allowed to live a few weeks longer, their hides would have been No. 1 and worth, according to locality, from \$1.50 to \$3.50 each. This early trapping is a loss to the trapper if they will only pause and think. There are only so many animals in a locality to be caught each winter and why catch them before their fur is prime?

In the latitude of Southern Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, etc., skunk caught in the month of October are graded back from one to three grades (and even sometimes into trash), where if they were not caught until November 15th how different would be the classification. The same is true of opossum, mink, muskrat, coon, fox, etc.

* * *

Skunk are one of the animals that become prime first each fall. The date that they become prime depends much on the weather. Fifteen years ago, when trapping in Southern Ohio, the writer has sold skunk at winter prices caught as early as October 16, while other seasons those caught the 7th of November, or three weeks later, blued and were graded back. Am glad to say that years ago I learned not to put out traps until November.

That the weather has much to do with the priming of furs and pelts there is no question. If the fall is colder than usual the furs will become prime sooner, while if the freezing weather is later the pelts will be later in "priming up."

In the sections where weasel turn white (then called ermine by many), trappers have a good guide. When they become white they are prime and so are most other land animals. In fact, some are fairly good a week or two before.

When a pelt is put on the stretcher and becomes blue in a few days it is far from prime and will grade no better than No. 2. If the pelt turns black the chances are that the pelt will grade No. 3 or 4. In the case of mink, when dark spots only appear on the pelt, it is not quite prime.

Trappers and hunters should remember that no pelt is prime or No. 1 when it turns the least blue. Opossum skins seldom turn blue even if caught early — most other skins do.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SOME DEEP WATER SETS.



WHEN the rivers and lakes are fast bound with the grip of winter, it is not always convenient to find a suitable place to set a beaver or otter trap under the ice, says Martin Hunter in the H-T-T. The shore line may drop away into too deep water to set at the bank, or, it may be uneven rocks which proclude the possibility of making a safe and sure set.

When such conditions confront the trapper, it is good to know how to set a trap in deep water. It was a Mic-Mac Indian who showed me how and on several occasions I have found the knowledge very useful and profitable. In fact, more than once had I not known this, the conditions were such that it would have been utterly impossible for me to have set in the usual way. In after years, during my sojourn amongst Montagnais, Algonquins and Ojibway Indians, I never came across any trapper of these tribes who knew how to set a trap in deep water.

For beaver especially, what better place than in the proximity of their lodge? And what more successful time than in January or February,

when their winter supply of wood has become sodden and slimy from months of submersion.

Then cut an opening in the ice, off from the lodge entrance, and introduce a birch or popple sapling into the hole, cover the opening up with snow and come back in a couple of days, chisel about the protruding sticks and pull them out. Oh! where are they? You will find only the stumps in your hand. The beaver has come and cut the succulent young trees off close to the under surface of the ice and towed them away to his lodge. Now, if you could only set a trap there and place more flesh food you would most likely get that beaver, but the water is deep. Your baiting hole is away from the shore thirty or forty feet and you measure the depth and find six or seven feet of water. Again you scratch your head and are sore perplexed.

But, my fellow trappers, it is right here where I step in and show you the way to overcome the difficulty. Had I not caught beaver under such conditions I would not presume to teach others, but I have trapped them this way and always with success. And as for otter, setting in deep water is much surer than at an opening in a dam or other place which is likely to freeze up and put the trap out of order.

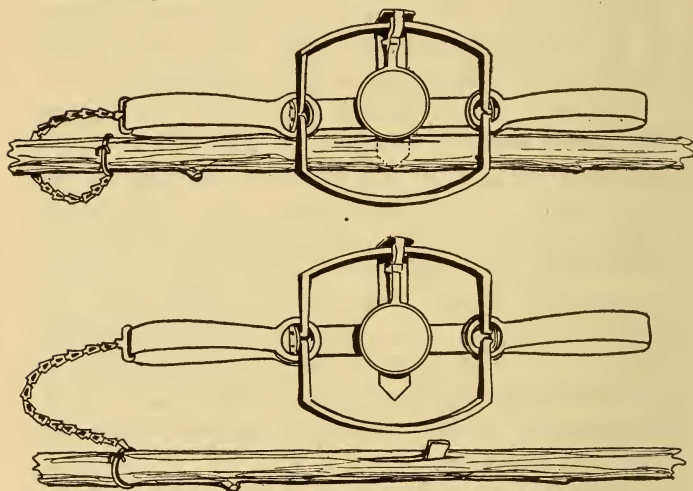
Now if you will follow me I will describe a "deep water set" in as clear a way as possible,

so that any ordinary trapper ought to be able to use it successfully. Cut a trench in the ice thru to clear water, fourteen to eighteen inches broad by four feet long; clear this hole free from any floating particles of ice, cut (dry if possible) a young spruce or tamarac, twelve to fifteen feet long. Have it three or four inches in diameter at the butt end, branch it off from end to end and rub off with axe blade all loose bark.

Introduce the small end into the water obliquely, shoving it down in the mud or sand of the bottom, with the butt end resting on the ice at one end of the opening. If the pole is too long to get the proper angle, take it out and cut off the surplus. This dry pole is to set the trap on and has to be at the proper incline so that when the beaver is swimming while cutting the bait sticks, he sets off the trap. When the pole is in the proper position, mark with your axe or chisel about twelve or fifteen inches under the level of the water.

Now take out the pole and hew a flat surface, at the spot previously marked, about a foot long. Slant your pole sideways and drive in the corner of your axe half an inch under the hewed flat surface, drive the axe until the pole is almost split in twain. If the opening wants to close back too tight, introduce a small sliver of wood. Now set your No. 4 trap; run the ring up the

pole above where the trap is to rest and secure it there with a piece of wire or a small staple. Force the spear part of the bottom of the trap into the split, chuck up to the main bottom part that engages the ends of the jaw. The trap is now in place.



DEEP WATER SET TRAP FASTENING.

When there is a muddy or sandy bottom, the better way is to allow enough length of pole to bury a foot or so into the bottom. This will hold the pole secure and prevent rolling. Now take two nice, young, juicy popple or young birch, branch them off clear to the small end and

have them six to nine feet long; put them in small end first and place one on each side of trap, five inches from it and about the same above. These pieces of food wood can be kept in proper place by packing the butt ends down on the solid ice and putting snow and water on top.

If it is at all cold it will get solid in a few moments. Next process is to cut fifteen or twenty young spruce trees a couple of inches in diameter and about five feet long; place these straight up and down outside the popple wood. This will form a fence at each side with spaces four inches apart. Right up at the end where all your work centers, a few dry branches can be forced in and down to prevent the animal from cutting away the food from the back. With a little practice you can have all this fixed to a nicety.

The beaver entering from the lower slope of the wood and swimming up to gnaw the sticks close to the ice, sets off the trap and in his struggles he pulls it clear from the cleft and in a few moments is drowned. After all is in shape the opening in the ice is dusted over with snow and left to freeze.

In visiting the trap at the end of two or three days, it is only necessary to chisel a very small hole to see if the trap or bait are displaced. This

can be readily ascertained by lying flat on the ice, partly cover your head with your coat or blanket and with your face close to the hole all objects in a few moments will become clear.

For otter set, the trap pole is made in the same way, but instead of popple or birch, a small fish is used for bait. Skewer it from the dorsal fin thru to the stomach and suspend it above and back of the trap at the proper distance. As it appears in its natural position in the water and the skewer is hardly visible, an otter swimming past takes it for a live fish and in dashing for his meal gets caught.

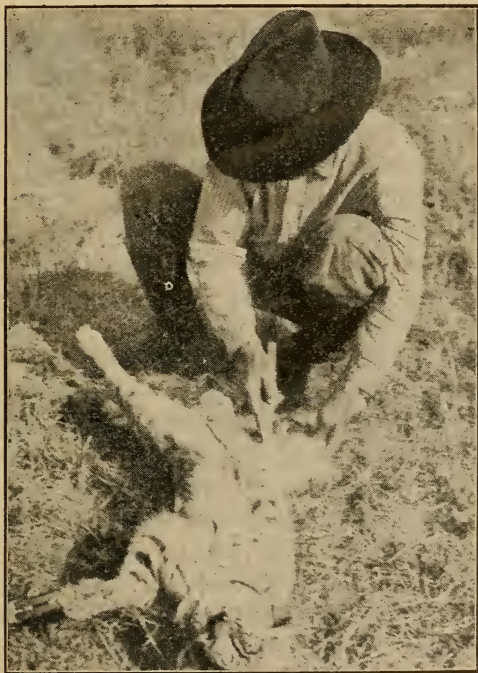
I have found this set very successful in creeks and small rivers, even in setting out from the shore.

Otters, like mink, have their feeding grounds on lakes and connecting rivers and are sure to skirt the shores in swimming down or up stream. If the stream is very broad it will be as well to have a trap on each shore and thus enhance the certainty of getting his fur.

The best fish for an otter set is white fish or trout a pound and a half to two pounds. By changing the bait once a week your trap can be kept set all winter without getting out of order.

Back of this article I mentioned "chisel." A chisel is almost a necessity to a trapper, especially if the ice is thick. With only an axe the-

trapper gets splashed all over and when this freezes he is in a most uncomfortable state. A



SKINNING A BOB CAT.

good strong ice chisel can be had in the ordinary one and a half-inch carpenter's mortising chisel. Have a hole drilled thru both sides of the socket

about three-quarters of an inch from the rim, carry a stout screw in your pocket and the chisel in your bag or bundle.

When necessary to use the chisel for ice trenching, cut a dry sound young sapling, six feet long, take off most of the bark and point the end the required length and shape off the socket by knocking the end of the handle against a nearby tree or rock. The chisel becomes firmly fixed. Now introduce the screw into one of the holes and with your axe bang it clear thru and out on the other side. The screw used for this purpose should be one and three-quarters inches long.

When finished with your chisel, if not likely to be required again at that place, it may be chopped off the handle and at your first fire the socket part can be placed in hot ashes or close to the blaze until the wood stump is so charred that it will readily scrape out, securing the screw for another time. Ice chisels are indispensable to any one trapping beaver, otter or mink, and no Indian would consider his outfit complete without one. I have seen them made out of the prong of a deer antler. This was before the imported article was introduced into the far back country. The horn was sharpened to a cutting edge at the business end and the shank lashed to the handle with deer skin thongs.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SKINNING AND STRETCHING.

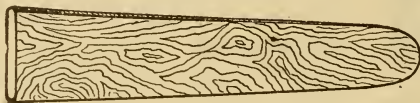


MUCH importance should be attached to the skinning and stretching of all kinds of skins so as to command the highest commercial value. The fisher, otter, foxes, lynx, marten, mink, ermine, civet, cats and skunk should be cased, that is, taken off whole.

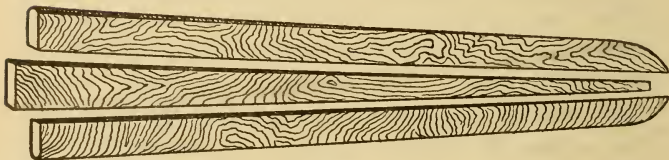
Commence with the knife in the center of one hind foot and slit up the inside of the leg, up to and around the vent and down the other leg in a like manner. Cut around the vent, taking care not to cut the lumps or glands in which the musk of certain animals is secreted, then strip the skin from the bone of the tail with the aid of a split stick gripped firmly in the hand while the thumb of the other hand presses against the animal's back just above. Make no other slits in the skin except in the case of the skunk and otter, whose tails require to be split, spread, and tacked on a board.

Turn the skin back over the body, leaving the pelt side out and the fur side inward, and by cutting a few ligaments, it will peel off very readily. Care should be taken to cut closely

around the nose, ears and lips, so as not to tear the skin. Have a board made about the size and shape of the three-board stretcher, only not split in halves. This board is to put the skin over in order to hold it better while removing particles of fat and flesh which adheres to it



Single Board



Three Board Stretcher

SINGLE AND THREE BOARD STRETCHER.

while skinning, which can be done with a blunt-edged knife, by scraping the skin from the tail down toward the nose — the direction in which the hair roots grow — never scrape up the other way or you will injure the fiber of the skin, and care should be taken not to scrape too hard, for if the skin fiber is injured its value is decreased.

Now, having been thoroughly "fleshed," as the above process is called, the skin is ready for stretching, which is done by inserting the two halves of the three-board stretcher and drawing the skin over the boards to its fullest extent, with the back on one side and the belly on the other, and tacking it fast by driving in a small nail an inch or so from each side of the tail near the edges of the skin; also, in like manner the other side. Now insert the wedge and drive it between the halves almost its entire length. Care should be taken, however, to not stretch the skin so much as to make the fur appear thin and thus injure its value. Now put a nail in the root of the tail and fasten it to the wedge; also, draw up all slack parts and fasten. Care should be taken to have both sides of the skin of equal length, which can be done by lapping the leg flippers over each other. Now draw up the under lip and fasten, and pull the nose down until it meets the lip and tack it fast, and then the skin is ready to hang away to cure.

Do not dry skins at a fire or in the sun, or in smoke. It often burns them when they will not dress and are of no value. Dry in a well-covered shed or tent where there is a free circulation of air, and never use any preparation, such as alum and salt, as it only injures them for market. Never stretch the noses out long, as

some trappers are inclined to do, but treat them as above described, and they will command better values. Fur buyers are inclined to class long-nosed skins as "southern" and pay a small price for them, as Southern skins are much lighter in fur than those of the North.

The badger, beaver, bear, raccoon and wolf must always be skinned "open;" that is, ripped up the belly from vent to chin after the following manner: Cut across the hind legs as if to be "cased" and then rip up the belly. The skin can then be removed by flaying as in skinning a beef.

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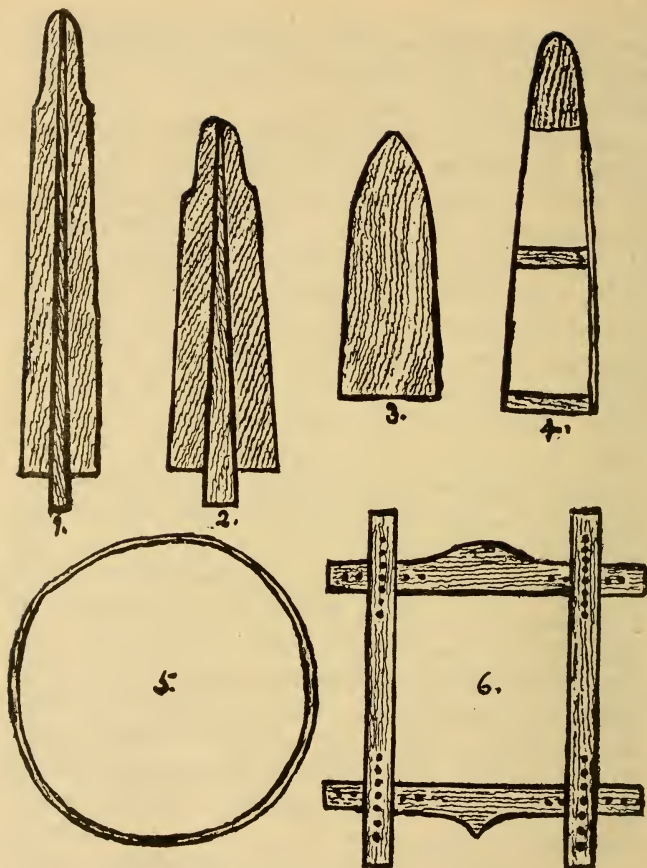
Another experienced trapper says: The animals which should be skinned open are bear, beaver, raccoon, badger, timber wolf and wolverines. The way to do this is to rip the skin open from the point of the lower jaw, in a straight line, to the vent. Then rip it open on the back of the hind legs, and the inside of the front legs, and peel the skin carefully off the body. Beaver, however, should not have the front legs split open and the tail, having no fur, is of course cut off. If the skin is a fine one, and especially in the case of bear, the feet should not be cut off, but should be skinned, leaving the claws on. I would also advise saving the skull, and the proper way to clean it is to scrape

the flesh off with a knife. When the animal is skinned, roll the skin up with the fur side out and put it in your pack.

See that there are no burrs or lumps of mud in the fur, before you do any fleshing. My way of fleshing furs — there may be better ways — is to draw the skin over a smooth board, made for the purpose and scraping, or peeling, with a blunt edged knife. Commence at the tail, and scrape towards the head, otherwise you may injure the fibre of the hide. Over the back and shoulders of most animals is a thin layer of flesh. This should be removed, and when done, there should be nothing remaining but the skin and fur. Raccoon and muskrat are easily fleshed by pinching the flesh between the edge of the knife and the thumb.

For stretching boards, I prefer a three board stretcher, but a plain board will answer. For muskrats, use a single board. Open skins are best stretched in frames or hoops, but it is all right to stretch them on the wall on the inside of a building. The boards shown in the cut are, to my notion, the proper shapes, and I would advise making a good supply of them before the season commences.

To use these three board stretchers, insert the two halves of the board in the skin, draw the skin down and fasten the hind legs, with



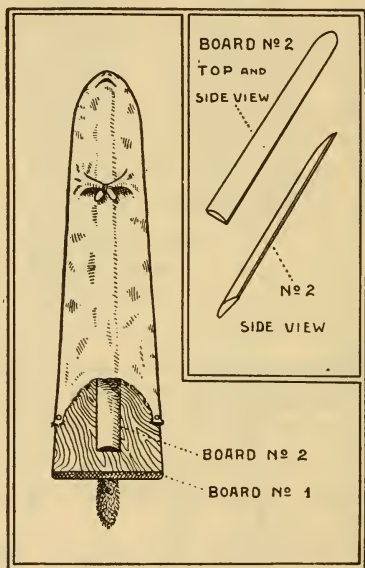
SOME STRETCHING PATTERNS.

tacks, to the edges of the boards. This stretches the hide long. Then insert the wedge between the two boards, which will stretch the skin out to its fullest extent, and give it the proper shape. Finish by fastening with tacks, pulling the nose over the point of the board, and drawing the skin of the lower jaw up against the nose. Hang the furs in a cool, dry place and as soon as they are dry, remove them from the boards. Fox skins should be turned with the fur side out, after removing from the board.

In using the hoop stretcher, the hide is laced inside the hoop, with twine, the skin of the coon being stretched square and the beaver round. All other furs should be stretched so as not to draw them out of their natural shape. If the weather is warm and the furs are likely to taint, salt them. A salted skin is better than a tainted one. Put salt in the tail, and punch a hole in the end of the tail, with a pointed wire, to let the water drain out, or split the tail up about one-half inch from tip.

The skin of the bear is, perhaps, more likely to spoil than any other, and the ears especially, are likely to taint and slip the fur. To prevent this, slit the ears open on the inside, skin them back almost to the edge and fill them with salt, also salt the base of the ears, on the flesh side of the hide.

In stretching, says a North Dakota trapper, we use a one board stretcher as follows: Put on the fur after you have fleshed it, the four feet on one side and the tail on the other. Tack

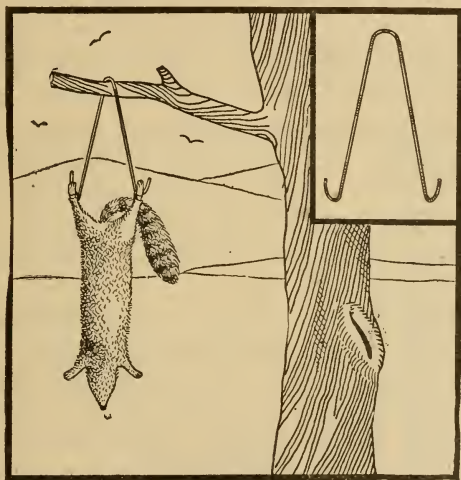


DAKOTA TRAPPER'S METHOD.

down the hind feet and the tail, then take a piece of board about 1 x $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (this would be about the correct size for a mink) rounded off except on one side. Put it below the fur on the

side where the feet are, tie the front feet. When you are going to take off the fur, pull out the small board and the fur will come off easy.

A contrivance which I have found useful in skinning is made of a piece of stiff wire 18



HOLDER FOR SKINNING.

inches long. Bend this at the middle until it has the shape of V with the ends about 8 inches apart. Bend up an inch at each end to form a hook and when skinning, after cutting around the hind feet, hook into the large tendons, hang on a nail or over limb, etc., and go ahead with

both hands. The wire must be nearly as large as a slate pencil and will work all right from foxes down to mink. Trappers will find this a great help in skinning animals after they have become cold. Young trappers should use this simple device as they will be less liable to cut holes in the skin. It pays to be careful in skinning animals properly as well as to stretch them correctly, for both add to their market value.

How many trappers save the skulls of their larger game? All the skulls of bear, puma or mountain lion, wolves, foxes and sometimes those of lynx and wild cat are of ready sale if they contain good sets of teeth. Several parties buy these skulls for cash.

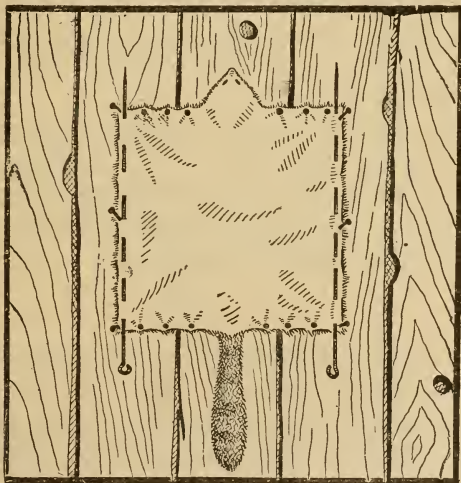
To prepare them the bulk of the flesh should be removed and the brain and eyes also. Probably the easiest way to accomplish this is to boil the skull with flesh on in an old pot until the meat begins to get tender. Then, while hot, it may easily be cut away, and by enlarging the hole at the back of the skull the brain may be scooped out. They should be watched carefully as if boiled too long the teeth drop out, bones separate and render the skull worthless. It is safe, but more tedious to clean them with a sharp knife without boiling.

The dealers pay from 50c for a bear skull to 15c for a fox, tho taxidermists and furriers often

pay much more. The British Columbia Government pays bounties upon the skulls, only I think this is a good idea as the skins are not mutilated and depreciated by scalping, punching or cutting as usual. Save a few good skulls and add dollars to the value of your catch.

* * *

Take two pieces of No. 9 fence wire about 30 inches long, writes an Ohio coon hunter and



WIRE COON METHOD.

trapper, file one end sharp, then commence at each hind foot and punch the wire thru close to

the edge as in sewing, taking stitches an inch or so long until you get to the front foot, then pull the hide along the wire just far enough so the top and bottom will stretch out to make it square, or a few inches longer than the width is better.

Put 3 or 4 nails in each side, then commence at the top and tack all but the head, then pull the bottom down even with the sides, not tacking the head, which lets it draw down into the hide, then tack the head. This is an easy and good way to handle coon skins making them nearly square when stretched.

Many inexperienced trappers stretch coon skins too long and draw out the head and neck. This can be avoided by following instructions given here. Coon can be cased but most dealers prefer to have them stretched open.

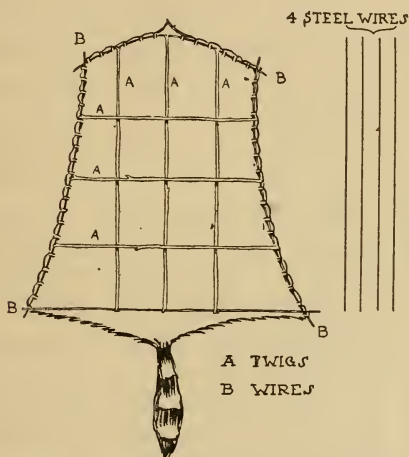
* * *

Get a lot of steel wire, says a Missouri trapper who uses old umbrella wires, the round solid ones. Sharpen one end, take your coon skin and run one wire up each side and one across each end.

In putting these wires in do it like the old woman knits, that is, wrap the hide around the wire and stick it thru about every inch. Now cut six small twigs, make them the proper length

and notch the ends, and you will soon have your hide stretched expert trapper style.

The advantage of this is you can carry stretchers enough for twenty-five skins in one hand and don't have to hunt up a barn door and



WIRE AND TWIG COON METHOD.

box of tacks and hammer every time you want to stretch one. You can stretch in one-fourth the time it would take to tack up on a board, and you will have it in first class style the first time and not have to pull out a tack here and stretch a little more there.

* * *

I have always used the whole board (not split into two pieces and a wedged shape piece as some do), writes a Massachusetts trapper, and made as follows:

For mink I use a $\frac{3}{8}$ inch board about 40 inches in length, 4 inches wide at the large end, tapering to about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the small end with the edges planed down from near the middle of the board to the edge, leaving a thin edge and sandpapered down smooth. I make the board of this length for the reason that it sometimes happens that a mink may have laid in a trap for several days before being taken out, and if under water it is not always easy to determine the exact length of time it has been in the trap, and there may be a possibility that if put on the board to dry that having laid so long it will taint before it will get thoroughly dry. I have seen them in a case of this kind where several and perhaps nearly all the hairs on the end of the tail would shed or pull out thereby damaging the skin to a greater or less extent.

Now when I get a mink in this condition after pulling on the board and tacking all around, I split the tail open after which I lay it open and tack all around the same way you would with an otter skin. By employing this means you will often save the loss of the tail by thus tainting and a corresponding loss on the value of the skin.

The value of the mink skin is in no way damaged by this process. Some dealers prefer to have all the skins they buy cured in this manner.

For stretching the muskrat skin I also use a board of the same thickness as for mink, about 20 inches in length, $6\frac{1}{2}$ or 7 inches at the large end with a slightly rounding taper to a width of about 3 inches at small end, the sides planed down to a thin edge the same as for the mink boards; in fact, I prefer the same manner of stretching all cased skins, using care not to have the boards so wide as to stretch the skins to a width much exceeding the natural width before it was placed over the board, but giving them all the strain they will stand with reason, lengthwise. If stretched too wide it tends to make the fur thinner and lessens the value of it.

I usually pull the skins, especially muskrats, onto the boards far enough so that the smaller end will extend through the mouth of the skin for perhaps $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, and when the skins are sufficiently dry to remove, all that is required is to take hold of them with a hand on either edge of the skin and give it a sharp tap on the small end, when the skin will come off at once. By stretching the skins on the boards with the back on one side, belly on the opposite side, they come off the boards looking smooth and uniform in width, and command a great deal better price than if

thrown on in a haphazard way on a shingle or an inch board badly shaped, as a great many beginners do. I have seen some shameful work done in this respect.

It is always necessary to remove all surplus grease and fat which can readily be done immediately after the skin is stretched, otherwise they will heat, sweat and mold to a certain extent after they are removed from the boards, which injures both the appearance and sale of them. It is well to look after all these little details. These descriptions are given with the desire to help some of the beginners. If they will start in by using a little care in stretching and having pride in their work they will find the business both more pleasant and profitable.

* * *

If convenient when going into camp, writes an old successful trapper who has pursued the fur bearers in many states, you should take several stretching boards for your different kinds of fur with you. If not, you can generally find a tree that will split good and you can split some out. It is usually hard to find widths that are long and straight enough to bend so as to form a good shaped stretcher. You should always aim to stretch and cure furs you catch in the best manner.

In skinning you should rip the animal straight from one heel across to the other and close to the roots of the tail on the under side. Work the skin loose around the bone at the base until you can grasp the bone of the tail with the first two fingers of the right hand while you place the bone between the first two fingers of the left hand. Then, by pulling you will draw the entire bone from the tail which you should always do.

Sometimes when the animal has been dead for some time the bone will not readily draw from the tail. In this case cut a stick the size of your finger about eight inches long. Cut it away in the center until it will readily bend so that the two ends will come together. Then cut a notch in each part of stick just large enough to let the bone of the tail in and squeeze it out. It is necessary to whittle one side of the stick at the notch so as to form a square shoulder.

You should have about three sizes of stretching boards for mink and fox. For mink they should be from $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches down to 3 inches and for fox from $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches down to 5 inches wide, and in length the fox boards may be four feet long, and the mink boards three feet long.

The boards should taper slightly down to within 8 inches of the end for fox, and then rounded up to a round point. The mink boards

should be rounded at 4 or 5 inches from this point. You will vary the shape of the board in proportion to the width. Stretching boards should not be more than $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick. A belly strip the length or nearly the length of the boards $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches at the wide end, tapering to a point at the other end and about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick. Have the boards smooth and even on the edges. Other stretching boards should be made in proportion to the size and shape of the animal whose skin is to be stretched.

You should not fail to remove all the fat and flesh from the skin immediately after the skin is on the board. If a skin is wet when taken from the animal it should be drawn lightly on a board until the fur is quite dry. Then turn the skin flesh side out and stretch.

* * *

Beginning at the left, dimensions and skins stretched on the various boards are given :

No. 1. Mink board, length 28 inches and 4 wide.

No. 2. Mink board, length 28 inches and $3\frac{1}{2}$ wide.

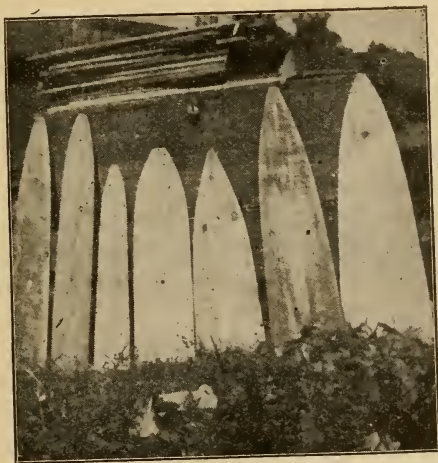
No. 3. Weasel board length 20 inches and $2\frac{1}{2}$ wide.

No. 4. Muskrat board, length 21 inches and 6 inches wide.

No. 5. Opossum board, (small), length 20 inches and $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide.

No. 6. Skunk or opossum, (medium), length 28 inches and 7 inches wide.

No. 7. Skunk and opossum, (large), length 28 inches and 8 inches wide.



SIZE OF STRETCHING BOARDS.

Old and experienced hunters and trappers know about the shape and size to make the various stretching boards for the fur bearers, but for the guidance of beginners and those who are careless about stretching pelts, the above description is especially meant.

Trappers in Southern sections will no doubt find the boards as described here too large for most of their skunk. In the Northeast the mink boards will also be too large, but for this section (Ohio), they are about correct. The general shape of the boards can be seen from the illustration.

* * *

One of the best ways, writes a Minnesota trapper, to take off the skin of an animal is by cutting the skin around the hind legs or feet, and then slitting the skin down inside the hind legs to the body joining the two slits between the hind legs, then remove the skin on the tail by pushing up the thumb nail, or a thin flat piece of wood against the bone of the tail and draw off the skin.

Now commence to draw the body of the animal through the slit already made without enlarging it, drawing the skin over itself, the fur side within. When the forefeet are reached, cut the skin away from them at the wrists, and then skin over the head until the mouth is reached when the skin should be finally removed at the lips.

One thing to be borne in mind when stretching a skin to dry, is that it must be drawn tight; another, that it must be stretched in a place where neither the heat of a fire or that of the sun

will reach it too strongly, and it should not be washed. Large skins may be nailed on a wall of a shed or barn.

The board stretcher should be made of some thin material. Prepare a board of bass wood or some other light material, two feet three inches long, three inches and a half wide at one end, and two inches and an eighth at the other, and three-eighths of an inch thick. Chamfer it from the center to the sides almost to an edge. Round and chamfer the small end about an inch upon the sides. Split the board through the center with a knife or saw, finally prepare a wedge of the same length and thickness, one inch wide at the large end, and taper to a blunt point. This is a stretcher suitable for a mink, or a marten.

Two large sizes with similar proportions are required for the large animals, the largest size suitable for the full grown otter and wolf, should be five feet and a half long, seven inches wide at the large end when fully spread by the wedge, and six inches at the small end. An intermediate size is required for the fisher, raccoon, fox and some other animals, the proportions of which can be easily figured out.

These stretchers require that the skin of the animal should not be ripped through the belly, but should be stripped off whole. Peel the skin

from the body by drawing it over itself, leaving the fur inward. In this condition the skin should be drawn on to the split board (with the back on one side and the belly on the other), to its utmost length, and fastened with tacks, and then the wedge should be driven between the two halves. Finally, make all fast by a tack at the root of the tail, and another on the opposite side. The skin is then stretched to its utmost capacity and it may be hung away to dry.

* * *

Not alone the skulls of the larger animals, but the skulls of any game, the skeleton of any bird, or fish, has a ready market, provided such specimens are properly cleaned, and in perfect condition. However, the hunter or trapper must bear in mind the fact that it is the perfect specimen that is in demand, and that a bruise on the bone literally spoils it for the curator.

If you will look carefully at any skull, you will notice that some of the bones are very thin and frail, almost like a spider web. These fine bones must be preserved if they are to be of any value to the Comparative Anatomist, and boiling or scraping simply ruins them. So much for the explanation. Now the method of cleaning, is by "rotting" rather than scraping or boiling. Take the skull (or whole head) and fix it solid in

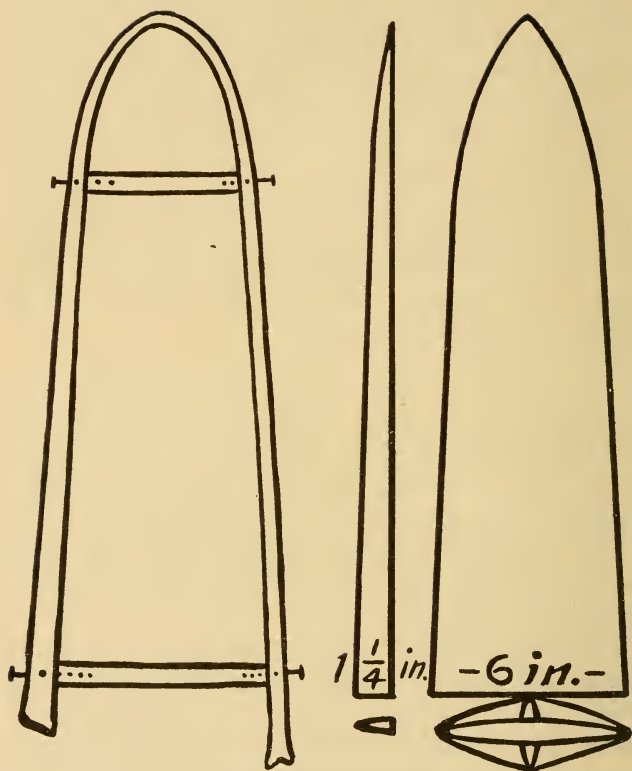
some can or jar, then fill it, or cover with water and put away for three or four weeks. At the end of that time, pour off the water and the bulk of the flesh will go too. Fill in with clear water again, and repeat as often as necessary. I have found that twice will do the work, and leave the bone in good condition.

There is a market for most animal skulls, if not damaged, and it may pay to preserve all. In the Hunter-Trader-Trapper, published at Columbus, Ohio, usually will be found advertisements of parties who buy them.

* * *

I have never had much luck with two-piece stretchers, but use thin board stretchers in one piece with a "sword stick" on each side to fully stretch and admit the air to both sides of the skin. This cures the skin faster and better than when only one side is exposed to the air, says a Maryland trapper.

When off from home, I use stretchers made from saplings, as boards suitable are not to be had everywhere, and cannot be bothered with when going light. To make these, cut osier, willow or hickory switches, straight and thick as the finger, about four feet long; cut two short pieces for rats 4 and 6 inches long and carefully bending the long piece. Nail these in with a



POLE STRETCHERS.

small wire nail at each end. A handful of shingle or lath nails and a clump of osier sprouts will make a full outfit of stretchers for a temporary camp.

* * *

I know it is as much value in stretching your furs and preparing them for market as it is in trapping, writes a trapper. If you have no boards, go to your grocer or dry goods store and you can get all the boxes you want for 5 or 10 cents apiece. They must not be over $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch thick; if they are, plane them down smooth on both sides.

I make what I call the two piece stretcher with a wedge for muskrats. Take a board 20 inches long, $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick, 6 inches wide large end, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches small end. Taper back 5 inches from small end. Now take block plane and chaffer off each side an inch or more up and round it off. Round and chaffer small end the same, almost to an edge. Now draw a line thru the center of the board and saw it thru.

Make a wedge the same length and thickness, $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch wide and tapering down to $1/10$ of an inch. If a large skin, push it in between the halves. Bore a hole in large end and hang up in a cool ventilated place to dry. After three days pull out wedge, and your fur will

slip right off without tearing. If the boards should warp over, tack a strip across the large end.

The mink stretchers are made on the same plan. A board the same thickness, 30 inches long, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, taper down $2\frac{1}{8}$ small end round chaffer. For large mink insert wedge made one inch wide. Taper down to $2/8$. For skunk and coon they are also good, only they are made on a larger scale.

Now a word about casing. Pull your hide on so the back is on one side and the belly on the other. Pull nose over small end $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. Put two tacks on each side, now pull down tight to large end and put two tacks each side, lay board on bench and take an old case knife, scrape off all meat and fat and be careful not to scrape too thin, so as not to cut the fibre of the skin. After you have scraped the flesh off, insert the wedge and your skin will be tight. Do not stretch your hide so it will make your fur look thin.

* * *

This is my way of stretching coon hide; use four-penny nails and use either the inside or outside of some old building, inside is the best. Drive the first nail thru nose. This holds the hide for starting. Pull each forward leg up (not out) on a level with nose and about seven or

eight inches from nose according to size of the coon. Drive next nail at root of tail, and pull down, moderately tight.

Now pull each hind leg out about one inch wider than the fore legs and a little below the tail nail. Now use a nail every inch and pull the hide up between the forward legs and nose, until it comes straight across. Next, treat the bottom of the hide the same as the top. Use plenty of nails. To finish down the sides, drive a nail first on one side and then on the other until finished. You will find when done that the hide is nearly square with no legs sticking out the sides and no notches in the skin.

CHAPTER XXX.

HANDLING AND GRADING.



INK should be cased fur side in and stretched on boards for several days or until dry.

SKUNK should be cased fur side in and stretched on boards for several days. The white stripe cut out blackened, etc., reduces the value.

RACCOON should be stretched open (ripped up the belly) and nailed on boards or the inside of a building. Some dealers allow as much for coon cased, from any section, while others prefer that only Southern coon be cased.

FOXES of the various kinds should be cased and put on boards fur side in for a few days, or until dry. As the pelt is thin they soon dry, when they must be taken off and should be turned fur side out. In shipping see that they are not packed against furs flesh side out.

LYNX should be cased and after drying properly are turned fur side out, same as foxes.

OTTER are cased and stretched fur side in. The pelt being thick and heavy, takes several days to dry properly. They are shipped flesh side out. Sea otter are handled the same as fox, lynx and marten, that is, fur side out.

BEAVER are split but stretched round and should be left in the hoop or stretcher for several days.

BEAR should be handled open and stretched carefully. In skinning be careful and leave nose, claws and ears on the hide.

WOLVES can be handled same as bear, also wolverine.

FISHER should be cased and stretched flesh side out, but may be sent to market same as foxes or fur out.

MARTEN should be stretched and dried on boards, fur side in, but turned as soon as dried.

OPOSSUM are stretched on boards fur side in and are left in that condition after removing the boards. Cut the tails off when skinning — they have no value.

MUSKRAT should be stretched fur side in and a few days on the boards is sufficient. They are left as taken off, that is, fur side in. Cut the tails off when skinning — they are worthless.

WEASEL should be cased, fur side in. The pelts are thin and soon dry. Leave fur side in after taking off boards.

BADGER are split and should be nailed to the inside of a building to dry.

CIVET CAT should be cased and stretched on boards fur side in. When dry remove boards and leave fur side in.

RING TAIL CATS should be cased and after removing boards are generally left fur side in for market.

WILD CAT are cased and stretched on boards. They may be turned fur out or left as taken from the stretchers, fur side in.

HOUSE CAT are cased and stretched on boards fur side in. They are sent to market usually fur side in.

RABBITS are cased fur in and, as the pelt is thin, soon dry. They are shipped fur side in.

PANTHER are treated much the same as bear. Care should be taken in skinning to leave claws, ears, nose, etc., on the skin for mounting purposes.

* * *

My experience has been that the house which makes only four grades of prime goods is the house that you will receive the largest checks from for your collection, writes a Michigan collector of 50 years' experience. So many grades quoted makes it possible for a firm to successfully squelch you a little every time you ship and yet you can have no reasonable excuse to complain for when you ship, you know that in some houses there is a grade for nearly every skin you send. So I, for one, would rather risk the fewer grades.

A trapper from Wisconsin says: For sample,

say mink are worth from 25 cents to \$3.00. There would be 275 prices between the extremes. Now if he is a fur buyer I certainly pity the trappers that would have to take those 275 different prices for their mink. A man should be able to know the difference between grades No. 1, 2, 3 and 4, and when he does he is then able to give a fair and honest price for every skin he buys. If he doesn't know the difference then, he had better get a job clerking in a hotel or sawing wood.

* * *

Many have requested that the difference in the various grades of skins be explained and for their benefit, as well as others of little experience, the following may prove instructive.

Raw furs are assorted into four grades, viz: No. 1, No. 2, No. 3 and No. 4. With the exception of skunk and muskrat most houses subdivide the No. 1 skins into large, medium and small. In addition to this many firms quote a range of prices about as follows: Mink, Northern New York, large \$6.00 to \$8.00. Would it not be more satisfactory to quote one price only?

It is generally known that Minnesota mink are large. From that state a No. 1 medium mink is as large as a No. 1 large from Maine, where mink are rather small. But as the dealers on

their price lists quote the various states and sections, why not quote one price only as follows :

MINK, NORTHERN NEW YORK, No. 1.

Large,	Medium,	Small,	No. 2,	No. 3,	No. 4,
\$7.00.	\$5.00.	\$3.00.	\$1.50.	\$0.75.	\$0.20.

These figures, of course, are only given for illustration and are not meant to show value.

Furs from the various parts of North America have their peculiar characteristics and it is easy for the man of experience to tell in what part of the country a pelt was caught. It may be shipped by a collector hundreds of miles from where caught, but if there are many in the collection the expert will soon detect it. This knowledge, however, only comes with years of experience.

Prime skins are those caught during cold weather and the pelt after drying a few days is bright and healthy appearing.

Unprime skins are those that turn blue or black after being stretched for a time. Usually the darker the pelt the poorer the fur. If only slightly blued the pelt may go back only one grade, while if black it is apt to be no better than No. 3 or No. 4 and may be trash of no value.

Springy skins, as the name indicates, are

those taken toward the last of the season or in the spring and tho often prime pelted, have begun to shed. The beginner is often deceived, for he thinks if the pelt is prime, the fur is. Foxes and other animals are often "rubbed" toward spring, which of course lessens their value.

A No. 1 skin must be not only average in size but free from cuts, etc. No unprime skin will grade better than No. 2.

Skunk, to be No. 1 or black, must be prime in pelt, fair size and stripe not extending beyond the shoulders. The day that only "star black" were taken for No. 1 is passed, for most trappers and shippers know better now.

A No. 2, or short striped skunk, is prime and the stripes, if narrow, may extend nearly to the tail. A small No. 1 or a blued No. 1 is graded No. 2.

A No. 3 or long stripe has two stripes extending the entire length, but there must be as much black between the stripes as either of the white stripes.

In some of the states, such as Minnesota, Iowa, the Dakotas, etc., skunk are large and are nearly all striped the same—long narrow stripes—but owing to their size they are worth about the same as the eastern short stripe or No. 2.

A No. 4, broad or white skunk, is prime but has two broad stripes extending down the back,

Most dealers class skunk as No. 4 if either white stripe contains more white than there is black between the two stripes.

All unprime skunk are graded down to No. 2, 3 and 4 according to depth of fur and stripe. A No. 1 skunk in stripe, but blue, becomes a No. 2, or if badly blued No. 3 or 4; a No. 2 skunk in stripe but blue becomes a No. 3; a No. 3 in stripe but blue, a No. 4; a No. 4 in stripe but blue generally goes into trash. In fact, if badly blued, any of the grades may be thrown to trash.

Muskrat are assorted into four grades — spring, winter, fall and kitts. Spring rats are known as No. 1; winter, No. 2; fall, No. 3; Kitts, No. 4.

No. 1 or spring rats are those taken in March and April. The pelt is then of a reddish color and is entirely free from dark spots. A few spring rats may be caught earlier than March, but so long as they show dark spots they are not No. 1.

No. 2, or winter rats, are pretty well furred, but there are dark streaks and spots in the hide usually on the back.

No. 3 or fall are not full furred and the pelt is far from prime. The dark streaks show much more than later in the season.

No. 4, or kitts, are only partly grown or if larger are badly damaged,

Opossum is the only animal that may have a "prime" pelt but an "unprime" coat of fur. This makes opossum rather difficult to assort unless turned fur side out.

If opossum have been properly skinned and stretched they will, when unprime, show a dark blue spot on the under side at the throat. The plainer this spot the poorer the fur.

Good unprime skins are No. 2; poor unprime skins, No. 3; the very poor and stagey, no fur, are No. 4, generally known as trash and of no value.

The other fur-bearers, such as mink, otter, beaver, fox, wolves, lynx, wild cat, fisher, raccoon, bear, badger, civet cat, weasel, etc., are graded much the same that is, all skins to be No. 1 must be caught in season, when the fur is prime, at which time the "pelt" is healthy appearing—never blue or black—must be of average size, correctly skinned, handled and free of cuts or shot holes.

Skins may be unprime from several causes, viz.: caught too early, improperly handled, under size, etc. Unprime skins are graded No. 2, 3 and 4 according to how inferior they are. The fairly well furred unprime skins are graded No. 2; the low furred unprime skins are thrown to No. 3; the poorly furred are thrown to No. 4, while low stagey skins go to trash.

Some skins altho prime are so small that they grade No. 3. This, however, is the exception rather than the rule. Usually if prime, the under size will only put the skin down one grade.

* * *

I have bought some for a number of years, writes a collector, and know that some trappers are like some farmers, they want as much money for a bushel of dirty wheat as their neighbor gets for a bushel of clean wheat. I have had skunk and opossum hides offered me that had a pound or two of tainted fat on them, and skins that were taken out of season, for which they expect to get No. 1 prices.

There are some who stretch their skins in the shape of an oblong triangle and leave flesh enough on to make their dinner. Stretch your hides as near the shape of the animal as possible; don't try to make a muskrat hide as long as a mink, or a mink as wide as a muskrat. Catch in season, flesh carefully, stretch in good shape, always take bone out of tails, keep in an airy building until dry and then you will not have to grumble so much at the buyer in regard to prices.

CHAPTER XXXI.

FROM ANIMAL TO MARKET.

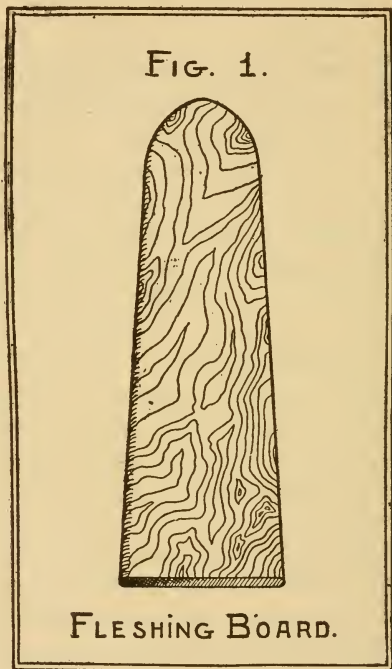


NDER this title, says an experienced Western trapper, I shall endeavor to show my brother trappers how to handle pelts:

As soon as I get in from my traps (I use a team and wagon), I feed team, dogs and self, then I proceed to skin the game in the usual manner; when game is all skinned I put on my fleshing suit, made of rubber cloth like that buggy curtains are made of, get out my fleshing boards, of which I have three sizes — large, medium and small — for each kind of cased skins except rat, which I flesh with thumb and knife. The fleshing boards are like Fig. 1 on enclosed diagram, made of 1 inch pine free from knots and dressed on both sides, 3 feet 6 inches long, and for skunk $\frac{3}{4}$ in. and 10 in. wide, tapered up to a blunt point, edges rounded and sandpapered smooth. These boards can be made of other sizes so as to fit larger or smaller pelts of other kind.

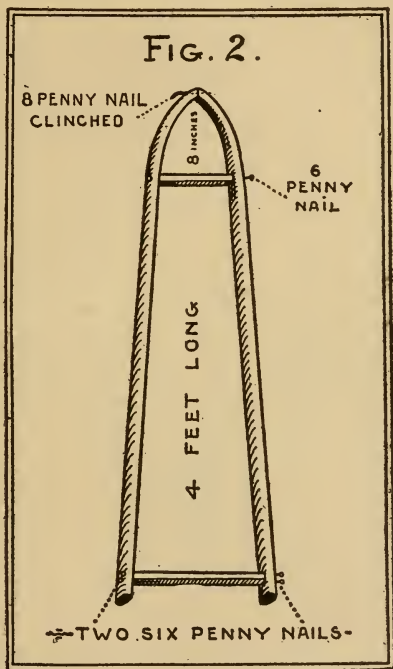
For a flesher I have tried nearly everything imaginable, dull knives, hardwood scrapers, etc., but have abandoned them all for the hatchet. I

use an old lath hatchet head and use it tolerably sharp; I proceed as follows: Put pelt on board but do not fasten, grip lower edge with left hand,



pull down hard, place point of board against breast and use hatchet with right, pushing down and holding hatchet nearly flat; use plenty of

elbow grease; as fast as you get a strip cleaned off turn hide a little but do not flesh on edge of



STRETCHING FRAME.

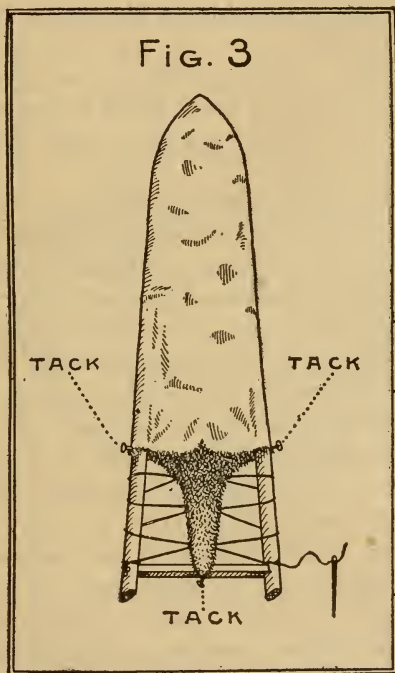
board. It may not work good at first and you may cut one or two hides, but you will soon get the knack.

If possible take a bitch skunk for the first as they flesh easier, and be sure there are no burrs or chunks of mud in the fur, or you will cut a hole the size of the burr. Now for the stretchers. In Fig. 2 is what I use; it is something of my own invention, and there is no patent on it. It is made of any wood that will split straight, and the dimensions are as follows: Pieces are 4 ft. long by $1\frac{3}{8}$ in. dressed smooth; pieces are $1\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{3}{8}$ in.; will say for large skunks here they would be 10 in. and $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. To frame you must soak or steam the long pieces; mitre the ends and fasten with 3d finishing nails clinched. Then place in position 1 in. from ends and fasten with two 6d finishing nails; place in position and pull up to 8 in. from nose and fasten: now chamfer off edges and sandpaper smooth.

I like this stretcher, as it airs both sides of pelt and will dry them in half the time. Fig 3 shows manner of fastening pelt; on belly side it can be drawn down and fastened to tail pieces with sack needle and twine; it is made of two or more poles fastened in the shape of a hoop.

In shipping furs, bale tight; do not ship loose in sack; place mink and rat inside of skunk and other fur, and always place the toughest pelts on outside. By bailing tight you will avoid crinkling and they will not look mussy and will bring from 5 to 10 per cent. more. Now, brother trap-

pers, fleshing pelts, as I understand it, is not merely taking the fat off, but in going deeper



SKIN ON STRETCHER,

and taking the flesh clean from the pelt so that if skunk, the stripe will show clear the full length and reducing the weight by half. On February

2nd I shipped 15 skunk, all large; the lot only weighed 9 pounds including sack.

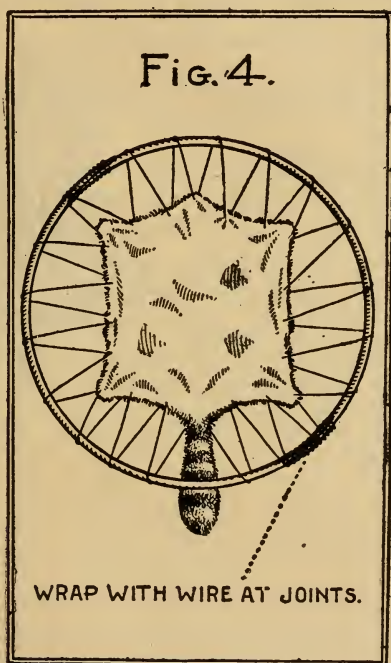
When stretching skunk and otter skins, if the weather is warm, split the tails, open and tack flat. Split open half way all others that have fur tails. Open pelts can be stretched in hoops made of one or more poles an inch or so in diameter, and sewed in with a sack needle and heavy twine.

In stretching do not get the pelt so wide that the fur looks thin, or so long and narrow that it looks as if a horse had been hitched to each end. Keep the natural shape of the animal as much as possible, dry in a cool, airy place inside, or on the north side of a building and away from fire.

Baling — here is where the expert trapper shows his craft, and in baling you will see him wipe off all surplus fat and dirt and place the heavy pelts on the outside of his pack. The lighter furs, such as mink, marten, cat, etc., will be placed inside of the skins that are heavier. For instance: From four to eight rats or mink, inside of a fox or skunk. He will place the head of one to the tail of another, the tails folded in. He now ties a cord tightly around each end, placing them on a square of burlap, and with sack needle and twine draws up the sides as tight as he can; then he folds in the ends and sews up snug. Furs thus packed reach the market in

good shape, and not such as they would if crammed promiscuously into a sack.

In conclusion, boys, let me suggest a maxim



HOOP STRETCHER.

or two for your guidance: "Prime caught and well handled furs always bring top prices."
"Take pride in your catch, no matter how small."

While the heading of this chapter is "From Animal to Market" it is well when shipping to request the dealer to grade and send value. If satisfactory, write to send on check. If not satisfactory, have dealer return furs.

When shipping furs under these conditions see that no green skins are sent — only properly cured ones.

While some dealers offer to pay expressage both ways we hardly think this fair and if no deal is made the dealer should pay the expressage one way and the shipper the other.

The Hunter-Trader-Trapper, published at Columbus, Ohio, in the interests of hunters, trappers and dealers in raw furs contains a great deal of information that will be of value along the line of shipping furs as well as trapping methods, etc.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION.

How to Tan Skins.



GIVE below several successful receipts for tanning skins and furs of all kinds, but if you have never tanned skins before I would advise you to make your first attempt on some skin of small value, writes an old hunter and trapper. Re-

move all flesh from a skin before putting thru the tanning process by laying it over what is called a fleshing beam and scraping with a dull knife; the fleshing beam is nothing more than a beam with edges rounded and a log peeled of the bark will answer the purpose very well.

First remove the hair from the hide by putting in 5 gallons of water, 2 gallons of slacked lime, 2 quarts of wood ashes and 3 ounces of soda. After the hair has become loose, try soaking in this mixture, remove it by scraping it off with a stick (be careful not to let it get on the hands, as it is very irritating to the skin). This

receipt can be altered according to the number of hides you have to tan. The amount given here is enough for 2 or 3 hides (such as goat, dog and animals of that size.)

Next draw the lime from the skin by putting it in a bath composed of 5 gallons of water, 2 quarts of wheat bran, 4 ounces of acetic acid and $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of salt. Finally put the skins in a mixture of 5 gallons of water, 1 pound of salt, $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of gambia, and 5 ounces of acetic acid. Leave the skins in each process about three days, take them out often and pull and work them.

When you think the skin is done, take it and put it on a stretcher like a coon stretcher, but of course altered to fit the skin you are tanning; stretch the skin tight but not too tight and put in the sun; at intervals of half an hour apply with a brush or rag mixtures number three until the skin will soak up no more.

Do this about three times and then put the skin in the shade or some cool place where there is a free circulation of air to dry. Lastly, when dry, oil flesh side of the skin lightly. This leather if tanned right is the best you can get, but the objections is that a trapper in the woods does not always have a drug store near to purchase the tanning material which is rather expensive, so I will give a few cheap methods also.

The way the Indians tan skins in the woods is to take the brains of the animal and rub the flesh side of the skin with them until it is rubbed in good; they then let them dry, working and pulling them until thoroughly dry. To tan mole, squirrel and such skins, draw the skin over a corn cob or board and place it in the sun, then apply sweet oil every 24 hours. After doing this about five times rub over with fine alum.

To tan for lashes, first remove hair, then put in $1\frac{1}{2}$ handfuls of alum and 3 handfuls of salt in 2 gallons of water; this leather is all right until it gets wet, then it is ruined.

To tan for furs, rub flesh side of the skin with two parts saltpeter and one part alum, roll and let it dry, then work soft. To dry the hair side of skins, take two parts wheat bran and one part clean sand, heat it and rub it in the hair side of skin till dry.

To tan light deer skins and such skins as sheep, dog, etc., put in three quarts of rain water, one ounce of sulphuric acid and a handful of salt; put in the skin, stir around for about five minutes, take it out and work dry, then it can be smoked and is ready for use. I think that by following the above directions closely you can tan any skin that can be tanned.

Camps and How To Build Them.

The trapper who spends the entire trapping season far from civilization must know how to make a comfortable camp or he is likely to pay dearly for his lack of knowledge. Especially is this the case if his trapping is done in the far North where the winters are long and severe.



THE HOME SHANTY.

The trapper should have one good "home shanty" to be used as a base of supplies for storing furs, etc. He should also have small camps located along his lines at convenient distances so that he can spend the night with some comfort if he has gone too far to return to the home camp.

The home camp is generally a substantial log

shack. It should be located in a sheltered spot, if possible, on some little knoll or slightly elevated spot of ground and as close to good fire wood and good drinking water as possible. The proper size of camp depends on the number of persons in the party. A shanty 10 x 12 feet inside is large enough for two persons. If it is larger it will be harder to keep warm. For a camp of this size the logs should be cut 12 and 14 feet long so as to allow for the notching of the corners. Of course the logs should be straight and they should be as near the same thickness as possible.

Having selected a spot for the camp and cleaned away the brush, etc., commence by laying two of the 14 foot logs parallel with each other and about ten feet apart. Cut notches in the ends of these logs, cutting down about half the thickness of the logs and lay two of the 12 foot logs in the notches. The next step is the floor which should be made of straight poles about five or six inches thick and 11 or 12 feet long. They should be fitted down solidly on the two long logs and may be flattened on top with an axe, or with an adz after the camp is finished. Then fit in two more 14 foot logs which will hold the floor poles down solid.

The door frame or boxing should be cut off square at the ends and butted up against the

door frame and held there by driving spikes thru the frame into the logs. Use all the large logs on one side so as to be ready for the roof. The simplest, as well as one of the best, kind of roofs is made of poles, chinked with moss and covered with tar paper or birch bark. The bark roof is the most lasting but requires more work. The door may be made of split cedar, or, if cedar is not to be found, it may be hewn out of almost any kind of wood. For windows, a couple of small panes of glass may be fitted in openings, cut between the logs, and all the cracks should be chinked with moss to make it warm.

There are a number of good stoves in the market, but I prefer to make my own stoves. A good stove may be made of sheet iron by bending it so as to form the top and two sides, riveting an end in behind and hinging a door in front. It has no bottom, being set in a box of earth, but be sure that there is enough dirt or it will burn thru into the floor. Holes should be cut in top for pipe and cooking pots and strips of hoop iron should be riveted on inside to stiffen top.

For stopping camps along the trap lines, the Indian tepee or wigwam is as good as any. They may be made of birch bark or tar paper and if they are covered thickly with boughs and banked with snow it will only require a small fire to keep them warm. If you are fortunate enough

to possess a rabbit skin blanket such as are made by the Chippewa Indians you will not need to keep a fire at night.

Trappers Shelter.

I noticed under the head of Short Letters in January number of H-T-T where one Bacellus of New York wishes to know something more about camps in the woods, or how to keep dry and warm in cold and wet weather, writes a Michigan trapper. This is how I build a camp along a trapper's trail:

I cut the logs about 9 feet long, cut them small enough so one man would be able to handle them. If cut from dry cedar or other light wood, they can be of good size. I lay the logs up on three sides until the walls are about $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, then I procure two stakes about 8 or 9 feet long with a crotch on one end; the other end I sharpen so it can be driven in the ground outside the open end of the camp. There are also two shorter stakes placed inside of the camp just opposite the outside ones and tied together at top with a withe, wire or piece of rope — these stakes are intended to hold the ends of the logs together, and also act as a support for the roof, which is made shanty fashion. I next place a pole about 5 inches thick by 10 feet long across from one crotched stake to the other. Now from

the back wall to the top hole I place scoops made out of split logs hollowed out with axe. They are placed split side up and another scoop placed



A LINE SHANTY.

over the first two. Short pieces of logs are put in under the last outside scoops and every crack is mossed up tight, and a bunk placed across the

end about a foot from the ground, and fire built in the center of open side. By placing 2 crotched stakes in the ground like the first pair about 5 feet from them, and placing a pole across the tops and then two short brace pieces between these two top poles. After this, straight poles ten feet long, about what one man can handle, are taken and placed all around the outside or open end of camp. This prevents the smoke from whirling 'round the camp, and it goes up straight.

OCT 30 1907

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